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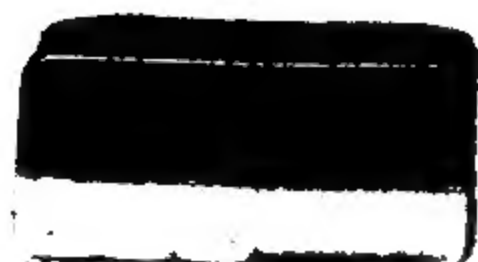
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THE RHINE.

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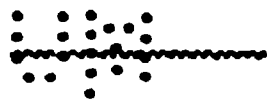


A. Butler, Del.

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THE
RHINE,
LEGENDS, TRADITIONS, HISTORY,

FROM
COLOGNE TO MAINZ.



BY
JOSEPH SNOWE, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

	PAGE
COBLENTZ	1
The Church of St. Castor	15
St. Rita's Morning Walk	16
The Miserabelchen	19
EHRENBREITSTEIN	23
Life of Herrmann	24
OBERWÖRTH	30
The Dance o' the Dead	31
NIEDER LAHNSTEIN.	
Church of St. John	44
The One Lone Grave	45
STOLZENFELS	51
LAHNECK	61
The Last of the Templars of Lahneck	62
RHENS.	
The Königstuhl	71
OBERLAHNSTEIN	87
The Emperor Wenceslaus	88
BREY.	
The Nixie	90
BRAUBACH.	
Marksburg	100
The Palatine Princess's Execution	102
PETERSPEY.	
The Wheel of Fortune	107

	PAGE
DÜNKHOLDER FOUNTAIN	118
The Naiad's Nuptials	119
BOPPART.....	129
The Knight and his Ladye-Love	138
LIEBENSTEIN—STERNBERG.	
The Brothers	144
HIRZENACH	151
St. Andrew's Night.....	127
KESTER.	
Ehrenthal	155
The Shift and the Shroud	157
WERLAU.	
The Gnome King	163
PATERSBERG.	
The Cat	174
RHEINFELS.	
St. Goar	183
St. Goar's Grave.—Pepin and Karl	189
THURNBERG.	
The Mouse	197
The White Maiden	198
LURLEY.	
Lore-Lay	201
Requiem.....	214
The Seven Sisters	216
OBERWESEL.	
Schönberg	222
The Crucified Child	225
THE PFALZ	228
Agnes and Henry	229
GUTENFELS.	
Caub	233
Guda and Richard of Cornwall.....	234
BACHARACH.	
Stableck	242
The Palatine's Disgrace.....	245
LORCH.	
The Whisper Dell	255
The Devil's Ladder	264
FURSTENBERG.	
The Phantom Mother.....	283
HEIMBURG.	
The Murdered Lady	288

SONNECK.	PAGE
Dead and Damned.....	296
DREYECKSHAUSEN	302
ST. CLEMENT'S CHURCH.....	303
ASMANNSHAUSEN	305
FALKENBURG.	
Retribution	305
RHEINSTEIN	321
The Barred Bridal	322
THE MOUSE TOWER.....	333
The Tradition of Bishop Hatto	335
EHRENFELS.	
Hatto's Treason	338
RUPERTSBERG	340
The Prophetess Hildegard	341
BINGEN	347
Rupert, Duke of Bingen.....	348
KLOPP	359
Henry the Fourth Deposed	360
RUDESHEIM	368
Gisella Brömser	369
St. Nicholas and the Boatman	375
ST. ROCHE'S CHAPEL	376
KEMPTEN.	
The Cockfight.....	377
LANGE-WINKEL.	
St. Bartholomai	379
The Silver Bridge	380
JOHANNISBERG.	
The Rhein-Gau	381
The Servile War	382
OESTRICH	383
The Nun	384
INGELHEIM	386
The Emperor and the Robber.....	387
Eginhard and Emma	414
The Empress Hildegard	419
RHEIN-AUE.	
Ludwig the Mild	428
ELFELDT.....	433
The Knight and the Yellow Dwarf.....	434
INGELHEIMER AUE.	
Gerhard Swan and the Countess of Cleves.....	437

	PAGE
BIBERICH	442
Conference of the Dead	443
MAINZ	445
Election of Conrad the Second	451
The Cathedral	457
The Poor Fiddler	458
Fastrada	461
Frauenlob	465
Conclusion—Farewell	467

PLATES IN THE SECOND VOLUME.

(DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER.)

	PAGE
Ehrenbreitstein	23
The Moselle Bridge	
Braubach.—Marksburg	100
St. John's Church, Lahnstein	
Bornhofen and the Brothers	129
Boppard Church	
Thurnberg.—Die Maus	183
Rheinfels.—St. Goar	
The Pfalz.—Caub and Gutenfels ..	228
Ruins of St. Werner's Chapel	
Rudesheim	457
Mainz Cathedral	

MOSELLE BRIDGE, COBLENZ.

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THE RHINE.

COBLENTZ.

COBLENTZ is one of the most ancient cities on the shores of the Rhine. At the time of the invasion of Drusus Germanicus (B.C. 13) a castle was built there by that conqueror; which, in process of time, became the centre of the great city that stood on both banks of the Rhine and the Moselle in the middle ages. The position of this city originally gave rise to its name—*Confluentes*, or *Confluentia*; a name which, though corrupted, has been still preserved in the word Coblentz. It was so called from being placed at the confluence of the waters of the Rhine and the Moselle: both rivers uniting their streams there, and thence flowing onwards, conjoined, to the embouchure of the former in the flats and fens of Holland.

In the troublous times of the Roman empire, and in the period of its greatest splendour and glory, the name of Coblentz is never once mentioned, as, indeed, might be expected: and for very nearly three centuries subsequent to its foundation, nothing is known respecting its history. The first Latin writer who alludes to its existence, is Ammianus Marcellinus, in his lives of Constantius and Julian the Apostate (A.D. 360);* but it is subsequently noticed in the “Antonine Itinerary.”†

The next mention made of Coblentz is posterior to the fall

* It is in describing the march of the Roman army along the Rhine that it occurs, and the passage in the original runs thus: “Per quos tractus nec civitas ulla vistor, nec castellum; nisi quod apud confluentes locum ita cognominatur, ubi amnis Mosella confunditur Rheno.”

† The author of this ancient work calls the place *Confluentes*, and states that its population then exceeded one thousand persons.

of the Western Empire. An interval of five centuries intervenes between the period of the previous notice and the one which succeeded it. It was the point of junction where the rival grandchildren of Charlemagne met to prepare the articles of the treaty of Verdun, by which the empire was subsequently partitioned among them (A.D. 843).

On the death of Ludwig the Pious, better known to the readers of history as Louis le Débonnaire (A.D. 840), his three sons, Lothaire, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald, inherited the ample dominions of his father Charlemagne. The two first, together with their deceased brother, Pipin, had been in a state of rebellion against their weak-minded sire during the greater part of his reign: their unnatural conduct had embittered his existence; and it is more than probable that the ill treatment he had, on several occasions, received at their hands, accelerated his death. It was not to be expected that they would agree with one another, when they proceeded to such lengths against him. Accordingly, a bitter feud, followed by a destructive war, immediately arose between them.

Lothaire, as the eldest surviving son of Louis, claimed sovereignty over his brothers; this privilege they were by no means disposed to concede to him, and they at once met his claim by an unequivocal declaration of independence. To strengthen their cause the more, they entered into a solemn league, binding themselves to stand by each other in all emergencies that might arise out of this proceeding of their elder brother. They then speedily assembled a large body of troops to resist his aggressions. Lothaire was not slow to attempt the enforcement of his claim: at the head of a powerful army he marched upon Worms; and, after a sharp siege, succeeded in expelling its defenders and taking it into his own possession. He next proceeded to Frankfort-on-the-Maine, where Louis the German resided; but here he met with such a severe repulse, that he was obliged to retire from before the city, and finally to beg a truce from the brother he had come to subdue. He was not, however, dispirited, neither was he to be diverted by any reverses from his ambitious design. Confiding the charge of the boundaries of the Rhine to his friends, Otgar, Archbishop of Mainz, and Adalbert, Count of Metz (subsequently Duke of

East Franconia), he quickly hastened to West Franconia, for the purpose of attacking his youngest brother, Charles the Bald.

During his absence, however, Louis had succeeded in exciting the popular mind against his pretensions; and gathering together a formidable force, he threatened the weakened army which had been left by him to watch the Rhine. This demonstration at once attracted Lothaire back again, and left Charles free to pursue his further operations. Through the aid of Adalbert of Metz, the ambitious monarch once more succeeded in alienating the minds of the fickle multitude won over by his brother, and in bringing them back again to his side. Louis, thus deserted by the popular party, sought refuge in Bavaria, with his few faithful followers. This was the movement which Lothaire most desired: and he availed himself of it to concentrate all his forces on the Rhine; thus interposing an unsurpassable barrier, as he deemed, to any future junction between his brothers.

Having done this, he considered himself secure for a season; and quite at liberty to resume the war, from which he had been diverted by Louis. Accordingly, he again despatched a numerous army into Western Franconia to distress Charles; and made every preparation which he deemed necessary to ensure its success. But Louis was not unacquainted with these manoeuvres, nor inactive to defeat them. While Lothaire was lulled in a fancied security, Louis entered Suabia, and, after ravaging that country, encountered and overthrew at Reis, on the Rhine, the army sent to check his career, under the command of Adalbert, Count of Metz. This done, he proceeded down the river without interruption, and effected a junction with the forces of Charles in Western Franconia. At the fearful battle of Fontenay in Burgundy, which immediately followed (June 25, A.D. 841), the pretensions of Lothaire to the supreme sovereignty were for ever annihilated: he was signally defeated—his power was broken to pieces—his immense army destroyed—and, according to some historians, he fled the field, leaving the almost incredible number of forty thousand dead and dying behind him.

The last resource of the ambitious Lothaire was the usual one of desperate and unprincipled men: to sow dissensions between his victorious brothers; and to turn, if possible, their

triumphant arms against each other. To effect this, one of the only two instruments fitted for such nefarious purposes—a woman or a priest—was necessary: he chose the latter; and accordingly, therefore, selected the Archbishop of Mainz to carry his plan into operation. The selection shewed his knowledge of human character, if it shewed nothing else: the plots of the churchman were successful; the brothers were brought to suspect each other; private disunion speedily followed, and wellnigh led to open rupture between them. At this conjuncture, however, they were suddenly awakened to a sense of their own danger by the precipitancy of Lothaire, in returning to Worms, and setting on foot negotiations with the principal feudatories of the empire before these projects were quite ripe for execution. Alarmed by the extent of the confederacy, and by the situation in which they found themselves placed, they once more renewed the solemn league by which they had before bound themselves to each other,* and proceeded immediately to take such measures as would effectually preclude any further attempt to disunite or injure them. They spent the winter at Worms, whence they had driven forth Lothaire; and passed the time until the opening of the new year in warlike sports, with all manner of rare and pleasant devices.

On the coming of the spring, the united brothers once more took the field. The campaign was commenced by a descent upon the country between the Rhine and the Mosel, then held

* This solemn compact was entered into at Strasburg; and the original document is still in existence. It is subjoined as a philological curiosity, being one of the most ancient fragments of old German extant:—

“ DIE FRANKEN.

“ In Godes Minna, in durch tes Christianes Folches, in unserer Bebhero Gehaltnissi fon thesemo Dage fram-mordes so fram so mir Got gewizzen indi Mahd furgibit so hald ich diesen minan Bruodher so so man mit rehtu sinan Broudher ocal inti Uthaz er mig so so anduo indi mit Lutherem nino theinen thing an gegango ze minan Wellon imo—ce Schaden werhen.”

“ HIERAUF DIE SCHWABEN.

“ Obo Karl then Eid then er sinemo Bruodher Ludhuwige gesuor geleistet inde Ludhuwig min Herro then er mir gesuor forbrichit ob ih ina we arwendeme mag nob ih noch thero thimhes urwenden mag imo the follusti widhar Karl ne wirdhit.”

for Lothaire by the Archbishop of Mainz, Otgar, and Hatto, Count of Metz, successor of Adalbert, who had been slain at Ries in Suabia the preceding year. The invading army was formed into two divisions; one of which, under the command of Louis, marched along the shores of the Rhine, and reached its destination with little interruption; the other, with still less difficulty, arrived there about the same time, by the road over the Hunds-rück mountains. The brothers then concentrated their forces before Coblenz. It had been conjectured by Lothaire that they would have taken the most obvious course to that point, the course of the river; and he had issued orders to Otgar and Hatto to contest their passage to the last extremity. But they had been made aware of his designs; and by this manœuvre had effectually defeated them.

Coblenz was held for Lothaire by these generals; but their means of defence were insufficient against such a mighty army as now threatened it. They accordingly fled to Sinzig, leaving the place a prey to the conquerors, and seeking refuge there with their master. A large force of the united army was despatched after them; and close siege was laid to that town. After sustaining all manner of reverses, and every privation consequent upon an abode in a beleaguered fortress, Lothaire was, at length, prevailed upon to submit to his brothers, and sue for peace at their hands. The preliminaries were settled at Coblenz in an imperial diet held in the ancient church of St. Castor, and were subsequently ratified at Verdun (A.D. 843). Of the famous treaty, which sprung out of this peace, partitioning again the empire of Charlemagne, and recasting, once more, the sovereignty of Europe, the chief conditions were: that Lothaire should have the title of Emperor, with the whole of Italy, and the tract of country lying between the Rhetian Alps, the Maas, the Scheldt, the Rhone, and the Saone;* that Charles the Bald was to have Gaul, or France; and that the entire of Germany on the right shore of the Rhine, inclusive also of the tract on the left known as the Worms-Gau, the Speyer-Gau, and the Nahe-Gau, with the important cities of Worms and Spire, should be the inheritance of Louis the German.

* Since named after him, Lotharingen, or Lorraine.

Coblentz, on this partition of the empire, fell to the share of Lothaire, and formed part of his newly founded kingdom of Lorraine. It was, however, again annexed to the German monarchy by Otto the Great, on his defeat of Lothario, King of France, at Paris, one hundred and fifty years afterwards, A.D. 978. Henry, the second emperor of Germany of that name, known in history by the appellation of the Holy, presented the royal palace, and the feudal sovereignty of the city, to Poppo, Archbishop of Treves, A.D. 1003–1024. By the successors of Poppo in that see, the hereditary stewardship of the city was confided to the Pfalzgrafs of the Rhine, then princes of great power in the vicinity. From them it passed, by marriage, to the Nassau family; and again it reverted, in form of a pledge, to its original possessors, the Archbishops of Treves (A.D. 1253); having, in the lapse of these two centuries, become entirely independent of their jurisdiction.

About this time it was that the democratic spirit which animated the chief trading cities of the Rhine influenced also the form of local government in Coblentz. The civic community was divided into two classes—nobles and burghers. The former consisted of about three hundred families; the latter were divided into seven trades, guilds, or companies—namely, cutlers, weavers, bakers, shoemakers, smiths, tanners, and vintners. Originally the government of the city was entirely in the hands of the nobility, all offices in the magistracy being filled from their ranks; but in process of time the growing power of the burghers became too great for total exclusion from them; and, after many attempts, at first ineffectual, they were ultimately admitted to participate in some degree in the privilege of self-rule. From that period the opulence and importance of Coblentz may be said to take their rise. The spirit of commerce and industry soon made it one of the principal places on the Rhine; one of the chief emporiums of traffic on that greatest highway of civilized Europe in the middle ages. It was then that the city extended itself, so as to cover not only the peninsula on which it at present stands, but also the opposite shore of the Mosel,* now without the vestige of a residence, and the narrow strip of land lying

* Then known as Lützel-Coblenz,—or Little Coblentz.

between Ehrenbreitstein and the river, together with the little valley running at right angles from it with the Rhine.

In the year of grace 1282, Arnold, Archbishop of Treves, then sovereign of Coblenz, proposed to surround it with a wall, and fortify it against external assailants. It was very poorly protected in this respect; and the citizens, therefore, at once acceded to his proposal. To carry out his design he suggested a tax, which was immediately acquiesced in also; and the work was vigorously prosecuted, to the great satisfaction of both parties. But the jealous burghers soon discovered that the archbishop intended to erect a citadel for the increase of his own power, as well as bulwarks for their defence from others; and they accordingly demurred to any further interference on his part with the affairs of their city. The erection of the walls was in consequence suspended; and the tax levied for their support discontinued.

Under the short reign of Henry, the second Archbishop of Treves of that name (A.D. 1286), who immediately succeeded Arnold, the works for the defence of Coblenz commenced by his predecessor were resumed, and considerable progress made towards their completion. They were, however, interrupted, as before, by the jealous spirit of the citizens, who deemed that the design of Arnold to build a citadel was countenanced by Henry, and that this prelate only waited a favourable opportunity to carry it into full effect. A civic insurrection ensued; and a civil war of two years' duration between the archbishop and the burghers of Coblenz was the consequence of this attempt at encroachment on the one side and of resistance on the other. The contest, which was of a most sanguinary nature while it lasted, terminated in favour of Henry, who inflicted the severest punishment upon the promoters of the revolt. During the remainder of his rule, Coblenz gave him no further cause of uneasiness, and no other disturbance took place within its walls until his death.

Diether, his successor, was not, however, so fortunate. The see of Treves was at this period split into two factions, partisans of two hostile candidates for the archiepiscopal throne. Of this favourable conjunction of affairs the citizens of Coblenz at once availed themselves; and once again they proceeded to assert their local independence. Their efforts were crowned with

success; they won back their ancient privileges, of which they had been deprived by Henry; and while Diether lived they enjoyed the fullest freedom.

On his death, however, which took place A.D. 1354, their political circumstances once more underwent a change, for the worse. Baldwin of Luxembourg, his successor, was a man of the most consummate abilities, and of the most unbounded ambition. The first act of his government was to enforce the almost abject obedience of all his subjects; his every other effort was directed to the extension of his dominion, and to rendering the principality over which he ruled the most powerful under the empire. Among other cities of the see of Treves, which he promptly subdued, was Coblenz; and never once afterwards had he occasion to complain of the refractory spirit which previously animated its inhabitants. He was, however, the great benefactor of the place: for he strengthened its defences against external violence; freed the shores of the river which belonged to him, both above and below it, from robber-barons and rapacious knights; extended the fortifications of Ehrenbreitstein, then Hermannstein; built the old bridge over the Moselle; established peace and order among all classes of the community, which composed the civic population; and effected, by the authority of the papal see, very many necessary reformations in the discipline of the church. He died in the fulness of his fame and glory; fame and glory, it should, however, in justice be added, more of temporal than of a spiritual character—the fame and glory of a politic prince rather than of a pious prelate—A.D. 1367.

Kuno von Falkenstein, who followed Boemund the Second, the immediate successor of Baldwin (A.D. 1388), in the archbishoprick of Treves, was a worthy disciple of that great man. Like Baldwin, he was ambitious, and like him, too, he was possessed of transcendent abilities; but circumstances favoured him far more than ever they had done his predecessor; and the extent of his dominions, long before his death, was as wide as ever the heart of that prelate could have wished. He governed, at the same time, the archdiocesses and principalities of Treves, Mainz, and Cologne, to each of which he had been freely elected for his great power and high reputation; and in right of his sovereign sway over these the three chief electorates of the empire, he became sole master

of all the fertile country on both sides of the Rhine, from Speyers to Holland. After a fortunate reign of twenty-one years, he died in the castle of Kunoberg, also known as Thurnberg, but more commonly called the Mause, on the right bank of the river, almost impending over Welmick, and nearly opposite to St. Goar, A.D. 1388.

For the period of a century and upwards after his death, a succession of inefficient prelates, alternately opposed and supported by different parties of their subjects, occupied the archiepiscopal throne of Treves. But though, during these turbulent proceedings, the citizens of Coblenz, it is to be presumed, were not inactive spectators of the ever-shifting scene, little mention is made of their city in the local history of the archdiocese.

The last archbishop of any note was John, Markgraf of Baden, who, supported by the emperor and the pope, assumed the electoral insignia, A.D. 1456, and became the worthy successor, though, it must be acknowledged, at a wide interval of time and talent, of his long defunct predecessors in the see of Treves, Baldwin of Luxembourg and Kuno von Falkenstein. Under his auspicious government Coblenz increased in prosperity, and extent, and populousness; and, next to Mainz and Cologne, became the most important city on the shores of the Middle Rhine.

It was about this time that Coblenz became a member of the celebrated Hanseatic League; deriving, from its accession to that great commercial union, a large addition to its increasing wealth and importance. With the conditions of that extraordinary compact this work has little to do; neither has the purport of these pages much connexion with the results wrought by it on the frame-work and foundation of European society: but a glance at the social state of the dwellers on the shores of the Rhine, at the period when it was promulgated among them—a brief retrospect of the laws by which they were governed, and the customs, oftentimes more potent than law, which then obtained among the people of this portion of Germany—may be permitted here as neither an unprofitable nor a useless obtrusion. The following sketch, illustrative of these subjects, is from an ancient—almost a contemporary writer.*

* Münster, "Kosmographie."

“ A son may forfeit his paternal estate by one or all of fourteen acts or things ; namely, if he lie with his mother : if he injure his father, or imprison him wrongfully : if he deny his paternity : if he strike his sire on the cheek : if he openly defame him : if he publicly accuse him in a court of justice : if he be himself a thief or a felon of any kind : if he seek to turn his father from the true faith, or to prevent his Christian communion at the close of life : if he gamble against his father’s will : if he refuse to become bail for his father : if he decline to release him from prison or other durance : if he neglect to care for his father in case he should lose his senses : or if he mischievously squander his father’s property.

“ If a man die and leave behind him a wife, she shall be free to sorrow, unhindered, for full thirty days. If he die without issue, then shall his fief revert to the lord in fee thereof, at the end of the thirtieth day from his death. After that day shall his widow divide the remaining property. His horse and saddle, his harness (armour), and his best sword, shall she give to his lord, if he be enfeoffed, or in the service of a master. To his next of kin she shall deliver over a bed, a bolster, a chest, two table-cloths, a bathing-cap, two cups and two basins. This is the usual gear given on such occasions ; but many add other things at their will. When, however, the widow hath them not, she shall not be required to give them.

“ When two or more male heirs are born to a deceased father, then shall the eldest inherit his sword : the younger, his harness. For, by the ancient law, the elder brother is deemed the guardian of the younger, until he shall have attained to maturity.

“ If a boy under fourteen be rendered incapable of increase, or the faculty of procreation be taken from a girl under twelve years of age, then shall neither be permitted to inherit ; but their next of kin shall enter on the possession of their property in their stead.

“ All descriptions of robbery and plunder may be divided into two kinds ;—that committed of a necessity, and that perpetrated in pure wantonness ;—and punishment shall be awarded according as they are proven to pertain to either. Road-robbery is aggravated by being committed on any one of three classes of

individuals : on the clergy or their people ; on pilgrims ; and on merchants travelling with their wares from country to country. Whoso plunders either of these shall be hung on a gibbet, erected on the highway. Should there be no effective witness against such depredator, then shall he undergo the ordeal in one of the three following forms : he shall be tied hand and foot, and cast into the water ; he shall be obliged to bear a burning ploughshare in his hand for a certain distance ; or he shall be compelled to plunge his arm to the elbow-joint in a cauldron of boiling oil. Should he refuse the ordeal, he shall be deemed guilty of the crime charged on him. Should he, however, pass through it uninjured, he has the right then to challenge his accuser to undergo it also ; or to meet him in single combat, to the death.

“ Fourteen years is the age when a youth may attain his majority. But if he, girt with a sword and bearing a shield and lance, be able to mount a-horseback, without aid, and stand in his stirrups while he rides a mile, then may he keep house, and administer his personal affairs, even though he should not have attained that age. When a boy reaches fourteen years, or a girl attains to the age of twelve, then may the one take unto himself a wife, and the other a husband, without the consent of their parents.

“ No man may be guardian of another's estate or offspring until he shall have attained his twenty-fifth year. No infant under fourteen shall act in aught unless with the permission of his guardian. Until he reaches the age of twenty-five, shall each youth have a guardian placed over him in regard to the disposal of his property ; and before he reaches that age he shall not be at liberty to make away with any portion of it, in any manner whatsoever. In case his father lives, he shall be his guardian ; otherwise his next of kin. And if, while under guardianship, he lose any property at play, such loss shall be made good to his guardian by the winning party. So the law commands it. A wife stands in the same relation to her husband as a youth to his guardian ; for, without his express permission, she may not dispose of any portion of their common property. In law he is her guardian.

“ Since that the emperor may not, in the nature of things, be present in all parts of the empire at the same time, he hath

deputed his power to administer justice to his principal subjects, princes, counts, barons, and belted knights. In Germany, each chief province hath its own prince palatine; Saxony, Bavaria, Suabia, and Franconia, being all of the number. All principalities, counties, baronies, and knights' lands shall the king of the Romans hold in his own hands for no longer period than a year and a day: if he retain them beyond this time, without conferring the fee upon some one or other, then shall it be lawful for the princes, counts, barons, and knights of the empire to make complaint thereof; and the Pfalzgraf of the Rhine shall be the judge of appeal between the parties. For the emperor is selected for the good of the state, and by his oath he is bound to do four things to that effect—namely, to strengthen the right; to punish the wrong; to increase the prosperity of the empire; and never to make it poor.

* * * * *

“There be among the German folk much distinction of rank, and many grades of that distinction. The first grade consists of the clergy; the second of the nobles—in which latter there are several varieties, such as princes, counts, barons, knights, and gentlefolk;—the third, of the burghers and peasantry. The princes take the first place in honour and in power; for they have broad lands and a wide extent of territory. The others take precedence according to their station—counts, barons, knights, and gentlefolk; but all sit below the princes of the land. When it so happens that the emperor displeases the nobles, they absolve themselves from their allegiance to him, and declare themselves and their followers free from his rule. This class considers itself not a little debased when any one of its members follows an honest occupation, and descends either to become a merchant or a manufacturer; also if he weds with an ignoble woman, or dwells as a recognized burgher in any city. They live not in communities; but abiding altogether in their castles, either on the peaks of the mountains, or in the depths of the impassable forests of our land, or in its spacious solitary plains, they deem themselves wholly independent. Their chief pleasure is the chase, and it also forms their principal dependence for food: the laws made by them against encroachments on this their privilege are, therefore, very severe. They hold that the wild

beasts of the forest are theirs—for their use and gratification alone: and it is in some places punished with the loss of both eyes, in others with sheer decapitation, for an inferior to trespass on their preserves. There is, however, a permission understood to kill all noxious animals and useless beasts of prey. These nobles live lustily in their castles, eating and drinking of the best at will; and they also clothe themselves richly—especially their women—who are all over decked with costly ornaments of gold and precious stones, when they go forth, or when they give a grand entertainment. In their excursions they are ever followed by a large train of idle people pertaining to their households: and they are known from the common people, wherever they be met, by their proud air and measured, haughty step. But they mostly go a-horseback, however short the distance; for they consider it unseemly in them, and a degradation to their state, to walk. Yet will these proud men hesitate not to set on and rob the helpless wayfarer, and deprive him of his honest wealth, whenever an opportunity offers itself to them. If a feud break out between two of them, or if one does to the other an injury or a wrong, each collects his vassals and retainers, and then they ravage and destroy each other's lands and property with fire and sword, like great potentates or sovereign princes.

“The burghers or citizen-folk are considered the lowest in the scale of honour and rank in the German empire. Of these, some serve the emperor; and some be the subjects of the prelates or princes in whose territories they dwell. Those who serve the emperor immediately, enjoy considerable privileges; their cities are generally known as free cities of the empire. Every year they select among themselves a chief or local ruler, known by the title of Burger-Meister, in whom they vest the supreme power of the community. His judgments in all cases of crime or misdeed are based upon reason, and the ancient customs of his class: but an appeal lies from them to the emperor. In every great city two classes of citizens are to be met with—the first noble-born, being generally the younger sons of the great families of the empire; the second the common-folk, consisting of mechanicals, manufacturers, and merchants. The former follow no occupation publicly—neither traffic nor business of

any kind—they style themselves patricians, and monopolize the offices of honour and profit in the magistracy of their respective cities: on the latter devolve all the burden of trade and all the weight of labour. Though these may acquire great riches, they are seldom recognized by their noble fellow-citizens: and it is with great difficulty that one of them ever succeeds in obtaining a position amongst these proud men. They are, notwithstanding, eligible to the highest offices of the magistracy: but, it must be added, they very rarely attain to them. In Germany, the cities and towns are generally well situate: either planted proudly on the summit of a hill; or built beside the course of some broad river; or lying in a rich and fertile plain: and they are ever surrounded with a thick wall, in some cases strengthened by deep dykes; in all defended with solid towers and bulwarks.

“But the lowliest condition of all that be is, however, that of the serf or peasant, who tills the earth, and lives in open villages or lonely cottages. A wretched life these creatures lead of it. They hold scant communion with each other; and live with their families and their cattle all alone. Their dwellings are rude huts of mud and wattles, thatched with straw. Their food is black, sour bread, with thin porridge or pulse soup. Their only drink is water or milk. Their garb is a coarse gown and a wide straw hat. Their subsistence is derived principally from supplying the towns with the produce which they raise from the soil. These poor people never know rest; early and late they are obliged to toil; their existence depends upon their labour. The greater part of their time is the property of their lord, who may compel them to work for him as long as he lists without fee or reward; and the severity with which they have been treated on several occasions has caused serious insurrections in the country. There is no steel so tempered that it may not snap—no bow so tough that it may not break.”

Such is the picture of the social state at that period drawn by this quaint and honest old chronicler: a picture which will, it is to be presumed, cast considerable light in the way of illustration upon many of the legends and traditions, and much of the history in these pages.

The subsequent history of Coblenz is soon told. In the course of the thirty years' war, this city repeatedly changed

masters: the Spaniards; the Swedes, under Gustavus Adolphus; the French; the Imperialists, under Wallenstein; and the Protestant party, being successively in possession of it. Merian, a contemporary writer* thus describes it at this period:—

“This noble city, so celebrated in the *Itinerario Antonini*, is pleasantly situated on a very fruitful soil; and all around it is grown excellent wine, on the acclivities of the hills and the mountains, and in the fertile valleys. An active commerce is carried on by its citizens with those of Cologne, Treves, and Mainz. The city itself contains many capital edifices, and public and private buildings, among which the foremost are the two abbey churches; several monasteries and nunneries; the Teutonic House; the princely palace in which the Archbishop of Treves usually resides when he comes hither; and a magnificent bridge of hewn stone built over the Moselle.”

In the year 1688, Coblenz was bombarded by the armies of Louis the Fourteenth, and almost reduced to ruins: but without any advantageous result to the assailants. During the early period of the first French revolution it became the refuge of the expatriated princes and old nobility of France, and consequently a focus of intrigue against the republican government of that country. In 1794 it capitulated to the Sans-Culottes, under the command of Marceau, after a few hours' siege; the garrison of Ehrenbreitstein having been seized with a panic-fear at their approach. The city was then annexed to the territory of the republic. It now belongs to Prussia; that power having acquired it by cession on the settlement of Europe at the general peace, A.D. 1815.

THE CHURCH OF ST. CASTOR.

Among the principal ecclesiastical edifices in Coblenz is the ancient Church of St. Castor, erected on an islet in the Rhine, somewhere in the seventh or eighth centuries. The islet on which it then stood has since become part of the main land, and has long formed an important portion of the city. This ancient edifice contains many rare and curious relics of the past time; and there are some historical recollections as well as local

* Topog. Archiep. Mogunt. Trevir. Colon. p. 31. 1636.

traditions connected with it, which will always render it highly interesting to the scholar as well as to the man of taste. It was beneath its roof that the famous diet for the settlement of the empire, and the reconciliation of the three grandsons of Charlemagne, recently alluded to in these pages, was held; and here, too, it is said, lies interred the uncorrupted body of St. Ritza—the gentle Ludwig's daughter—whose turbulent brothers embraced one another on that occasion at her tomb. It stands in the left aisle. Of this fair saint the following tale is related; and few there are among the Rhenish folk to whom such stories are more especially addressed, who refuse to give it the fullest credence.

ST. RITZA'S MORNING WALK.

At the foot of Ehrenbreitstein,—in those days known as Hermannstein,—dwelt, in the peaceful solitude of a small cell, Ritza, the sainted daughter of Ludwig. Though her sire had acquired the cognomen of Pious from the church, she was, if possible, more deserving of it than he; for she had renounced rank, and station, and wealth, and worldly honours, for the sake of religion, and had retired thither from the royal palace at Ingelheim to pursue, in peace and in solitude, her devotional impulse. The troubles which afflicted her weak father's reign might, perhaps, have had their influence on her mind; and the unnatural conduct of her brothers, his sons, would in that case have strengthened her resolution: but, whatever may be the fact—whether even such a person existed at all, and whether, if so, she ever dwelt here,—forms the subject of this singular legend.

It was the custom of the lovely Ritza—for she was surpassing fair as well as pious—to cross the Rhine every morning, to attend matin service in the church of St. Castor. At that period there was no bridge of boats, as there is now, extending its broad arms over the mighty stream, and embracing both banks of that broad river—nor indeed was there any other bridge at all to serve instead of it. The little intercourse between the dwellers of the opposite shores was carried on in small frail barques, no better than the curricles of the ancient Britons, or the equally barbarous trans-aquatic conveyances of the Scotch and Irish of the same era; and in times of flood or

of storm it was altogether suspended by reason of the danger. But Ritza felt no fear, and disdained to avail herself of human aid. Like another St. Peter she walked the waters, supported only by a slight willow wand, peeled every night for the purpose. Dry-footed and unharmed, did she daily perform this miracle in all weathers—sometimes in the presence of admiring crowds—sometimes unheeded or unperceived. She was a saint in the sight of the simple people on both banks of the river, long before death had emancipated her immortal spirit from its clog of clay, and ages ere the church had set its fiat on her canonization, by placing her name in its celestial calendar.

One morning, however, she felt something like fear at the wild aspect of the rushing waters; and she tarried awhile ere she took her departure for the church on the opposite shore. It might have been a falling off in the intensity of her faith; or it might have been one of the involuntary sins of sleep; or it might have been a neglect of some of the many penitential observances which she had imposed upon herself, or it might, in short, be any thing, or every thing, or all of these things put together that caused it: but, whatever it might be, she vacillated in her purpose, as she saw the rush of the white waves foaming like war-horses as they rode one over the other, and heard the mighty roar of the raging current, increased as it was with the strength and power of a thousand tributaries. Still her faith was stronger than her fear: and heaven, accordingly, triumphed. She looked on the shore, and she looked on the stream, and she then looked on the tiny twig which was to be her only support against the fury of the one, until she reached the dim and distant margin of the other. It was too frail, so she thought: and she also thought she would exchange it for a staff somewhat stouter. No sooner said than done. She plucked up a stout *espalier*, which sustained a large vine covered with showering grapes—(it was the vintage season)—and without hesitation commenced her perilous passage. The mid-river was reached in safety: but why does she totter?—what is it that agitates her? Alas! she is enveloped by the wild waves which ever and anon foam up over her head, while beneath her feet gape wide chasms,

shewing the unfathomable depths below. She leans heavily on her staff—she seems to cling to it as her only hope;—it sinks!—she follows!—is she lost? Listen!—

“Oh, Saviour of mankind”—thus spake she, and she deemed them her dying words—“pardon my want of faith in thy power—and forgive me my manifold transgressions of thy divine law. Pity and sustain my poor soul in this last moment of its mortal agony.”

Her prayer was heard. He whose voice stills the storm bade the elemental uproar cease. The waves receded from around her—the river, all within her reach, grew calm as a mirror—the winds fell on a sudden—silence took place of that tumult in nature—the sun shone out—the birds sang sweetly on both sides of the stream,—and the lark carolled his matin hymn high over head, in the far-off regions of eternal space. She cast the treacherous staff, the cause of her danger, from her hands;—she walked onward rejoicing;—she stood on the consecrated soil of St. Castor's church;—a grateful heart had she for her salvation.

Never more did she doubt the power of Him who holds empires in the hollow of His hand: never more did her want of faith place her in a similar predicament. For years and years afterwards she crossed and re-crossed the Rhine, in snow and in storm, in sunshine and in foul weather: but never again did she encounter such imminent peril. In the lapse of years she died, crowned with saintly glory. Her relics still work miracles with those whose faith is fully equal to her own,—but with no others.

So far the legend of St. Ritza.

There are very few other legends connected with Coblenz, and the paucity of tradition too, in regard to that city, is rather remarkable: these few, likewise, possess but little interest, and are of a character not likely to excite much sympathy. One among them is offered here, not so much for its intrinsic merit as

for the daring singularity which it exhibits in all its features, and the ludicrous profanity with which it is tinged in many of its passages.

THE MISERABELCHEN.

It is well known, this legend goes on to say, that when our Lord Jesus Christ lived upon earth in the flesh, he was often absent from the Holy Land with some of his more favoured disciples; by reason of the displeasure he felt at the lack of faith in Israel, and the want of belief in the body of the Jewish people; which made him rather seek to extend the blessings of the new dispensation to the heathen and to the Samaritans, than to that stiff-necked and still incredulous generation.

One day that his displeasure was at the highest, he called together a few of his most faithful disciples, including Peter and John, and James the son of Zebedee, and bade them follow him, for that he was going on a long journey. They set out accordingly—the Lord leading the way;—and after much toil and trouble, after passing plain, and mountain, and river, and valley, they reached at length that point of the beautiful Rhine where the sweet Moselle rushes into its heaving bosom, like a young bride to her lover's on the day of their marriage.

The Moselle banks were at that time inhabited by a hardy but honest folk, very much the same as their successors of the present day; plain spoken, and hospitable; mild in their manners; but strong of heart and limb: and who, though they did not then know the blessings of Christianity, acted in all respects as if their belief was close akin to its precepts and its doctrines.

“We shall not have much trouble with these honest people,” said the Saviour to his disciples; “there are here neither priests of Baal, nor Pharisees, those priests of the Devil, worse than any. What they mean they say, and what they say they mean.”

“Right honest folk they seem, truly,” observed St. John; “and full willing to believe every thing we shall tell them, I warrant me.”

The holy company preached; and their labours were well rewarded: for from far and near the folk on the shores of the Rhine and the Moselle flocked to them, to hear the word and be baptized and regenerated.

It was a burning afternoon, in the month of September;—the ground was parched with drought, and their palates were parched with preaching;—the very grapes on the poles seemed parched too:—indeed, all nature looked thirsty and longing to drink, for a glowing sun had careered through the unclouded heavens from morn till noon, and from noon to eve, for many weeks previously.

“Dry work this,” said the Saviour to St. Peter.

“Yea, Lord,” replied the prince of the apostles.

“Not much warmer on the Lake of Gennesareth,” quoth James the son of Zebedee.

“I wonder are our friends in Judea fishing for fish, or fishing for men,” interposed St. John the Evangelist. “I should like a drop of something to drink, ’tis so hot here.”

“Peter,” said the Saviour, “you have long legs. Hie thee away to yonder village, and bring us a schöppchen* of wine. Don’t be long, if you please.”

Gratified with this mission, St. Peter set forth at once on the journey. He did not wait to be asked twice, as some coy young men as well as maidens will; but off he went like a shot; for he was as thirsty as any of the others; and he always loved his wine, if every thing that’s told of him be true. It was not long till he reached the village; no one could say that he let the grass grow under his feet while he was on the journey. The first thing he did was to swallow a sound draught for himself: “the labourer is worthy of his hire,” thought he, “and have I not laboured all day long?” Besides, he was too wise a man to trust any thing to chance when there was the opportunity to effect it without. The next, was to get another for his Lord and Master and the remaining disciples. The schöppchen of the country was of precisely the same form as the folk use nowadays; that is to say, it was a large, ungainly-looking wooden vessel, wide at the top and narrow at the bottom, with scarce breadth enough below for it to stand on. Wine in hand, he set out on his return; but whether it so happened that the measure was too

* A wine-measure much used in Rhenish Germany, containing about the same quantity as a Winchester pint. The readers of Shakspeare will remember the word “choppin,” which has the same derivation, though another meaning has been given to it by some ignorant commentators.

full, or that he did not hold it so steadily as he might, a few drops of the generous liquor coursed over its edge on his hand, and, trickling down, fell to the earth.

“Ha! ha!” quoth the saint; “this will never do. Good wine was not made for the sand to suck up. I had better just sip off the ‘beaded bubbles’ which foam over at the brim; otherwise the liquor will be lost.”

Suiting the action to the word, he sipped them off accordingly. But ever as he sipped they seemed to recede lower and lower in the measure; and he, determined not to be foiled, followed them still, as they so sank from his lips. At length, he sipped so long, and sipped so lustily, that the bubbles stood midway in the measure. This he perceived, to his great surprise, the moment he desisted to draw his breath.

“By this and by that!” he exclaimed, “here’s a pretty piece of business! Truly, I did not feel myself a-drinking, or I should never have gone so low down in the vessel. What’s to be done? Ha! I have it!”

So saying, he drew forth the clasp-knife which he always carried about with him, and in the twinkling of an eye cut off the upper half of the measure.

“Come, now,” he then soliloquised, “that’s not so bad neither. It is now brimming full; and there’s a good lot in it too. Gone is gone: and no one will miss it.”

He proceeded on his journey. But once more the unsteadiness of his hand, or the fulness of the measure, produced the same effect as before. Some few drops again fell over, and were swallowed up by the thirsty soil.

“By all that’s bad!” exclaimed the irritated apostle, with a slight hiccup—of course, the result of irritation and anger alone—“By all that’s bad! but this won’t do!”

He sipped again and again; but each sip was deeper than the other; and he cut down the vessel sip after sip, or, rather, gulp after gulp, until but a sorry remnant of it was left in his hand. How much longer even that would have remained in existence is not known, inasmuch as by the time it was reduced to its least possible dimensions the excited saint had reached the spot where he parted from his Master and his friends some time previously.

The heat had by no means decreased in his absence, neither had the thirst with which the Lord and his followers were tormented; on the contrary, both had increased to a much greater degree than was felt on his departure. It is, therefore, by no means a matter of surprise that the latter quickly crowded round him, all eager to appease their longing, and obtain something to drink.

"Softly! softly!" spake Peter; "softly, my friends! You think, perhaps, that I have brought you a butt full of wine?"

They looked at him with astonishment and displeasure.

"If you do," pursued he, "all I can say is, that you are very much mistaken."

"How is this, Peter?" spake his Master. "What mean ye?"

"Lord," replied he, "I mean that though the wine seems not altogether amiss, I have brought you but a taste of it,—the measures here are so very small."

Of course, the Lord knew all about it; but he made no observation; it would not become him. The disciples, however, vented their disappointment in menacing looks and threatening gestures.

"Never mind, my boys! never mind!" said the jolly saint. "Have no care for yourselves. Is not He among us who fed the multitude? And can he not, if he wills that ye should not suffer hunger or thirst, make the dry rock gush with wine, and turn those stones at our feet into bread? But—if—he does not—will it—" he spake the words slowly, solemnly, and sententiously—"then the less of a piece of work you make about it, the better."

The apostles were ready to rebel against their prince, as many others have done from time to time; but they were prevented by the interposition of their Almighty Master.

"Peter," said he, and a smile beamed on his beautiful countenance as he spake,—“Peter, you are no better than you should be; for you took care to slake your own lime before that of your betters. You served yourself, whether we were to want it or not. Keep the Miserabelchen for thine own share. But take heed when you play such a trick again; and if you desire to be undetected, don't forget to wipe the wine-stains off your beard."

EHRENBERGSTEIN.

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Peter was dumb-founded ; but he embraced his wine-cup, as a mother will her child ; and he said not a single word.

“ And now,” spake the Lord to the others, “ you shall be my guests this day. Let Peter entertain himself elsewhere, as well as he can ; for bite or sup he shall not have at our banquet.”

From that day to this, the schöppchen used on the shores of the Moselle has been named the *Miserabelchen*, or Little Miserable.

There is nothing more to relate of the city of Coblantz.

EHRENBREITSTEIN.

Ehrenbreitstein, known in the middle ages as Hermannstein, lies on the other side of the Rhine, and serves as a citadel to Coblantz. It is said to be one of the strongest fortresses in Europe ; and is styled by native writers the “ Gibraltar of Germany.”

The derivation of its original name, Hermannstein, is not very clearly traced by antiquaries : some consider that it owes its origin to a temple, which, they say, once stood on the spot, dedicated to the German Mars,—Herrman ; others allege that it comes from the circumstance of the death of Hermann, or Arminius, the national hero, which took place here in the time of Tiberius (A. D. 23—31) ; while a third party attribute it to the erection of a castle on the site of the old Roman structure, by Herrmann, archbishop of Treves. Of these, the first appears the most probable ; but the second is by far the most romantic. The third can have no foundation in fact ; for, notwithstanding the statement of Merian (Top. Archip. Mogunt. Trevir. Colon. 1646), no prelate of that name ever filled that see from the days of Eucharis (A. D. 100) to those of Clemens Wenceslaus, prince of Saxony (A. D. 1812). It is the second, therefore, that these pages adopt, less for its truth, than for the opportunity it offers of relating the history of the saviour of his country ; of telling

the tale of the first great struggle for independence undertaken by the German people.

LIFE OF HERRMANN.

Herrmann lived in the time of Augustus Cæsar; he must, therefore, have almost been contemporary with Christ. He and Segest were chiefs of the Heruscii, or inhabitants of the Hartz forest. An idolater of national independence; he was, consequently, a bitter enemy of the Roman domination. Herrmann had been some time in the camp of Drusus Germanicus, the conqueror of Germany; and he had there succeeded in making himself master of the Roman military system. In subsequent times he turned this knowledge to such terrible account against them, that his name became a word of fear to the oldest veterans in the army of the invaders.

It was shortly after the accession of Herrmann to the leadership of his people, that Quinctilius Varus, the Roman proconsul of Gaul, then resident at Treves, a bold, bad man, commenced a series of oppressive proceedings towards the Germans on both sides of the Rhine, which completely alienated their allegiance from the empire, and ended in their virtual independence of it. Among the first to stand forth in the defence of his country was Herrmann. Aware, however, that open resistance to the power of the Romans would be useless, he resolved also to call in the aid of stratagem to effect his purposes. With this view, he excited an insurrection among his subjects, the Heruscii, and then applied to the proconsul for assistance to quell it. The politic Roman was not slow to grant the assistance required; he calculated on effectually weakening this spirited people by setting them one against the other; which done, he resolved to step in quietly and overpower the victor. Herrmann was aware of his intention, however, and he set about counteracting it. The insurrection, as it is seen, was but simulated, to draw the Roman forces into the impassable forests of the interior, and inextricably to involve them in the impregnable defiles of that rugged country.

Notwithstanding the information to this effect which the

proconsul privately received from Segest, the contemporary and collateral sovereign with Herrmann, he still persisted in his design. The Roman cohorts crossed the Rhine, over the bridge built by Julius Cæsar,* and advanced through the country of the Hasuarii, or Hessians, into the Hârz forest, which then covered the greater part of central Germany, and stretched almost down to the shores of that river. Allured onwards by false reports, they advanced further and further into the interior; nor did they perceive the perilous nature of their position, until it was too late to retrieve it. In that part of the forest, known as the Tentoberger Wald, they were surrounded on all sides by the Germans under the command of Herrmann, and attacked with an inconceivable fury. The disadvantages of the ground, the suddenness of the surprise, the violence of the assault, were insufficient to dispirit the conquerors of the world, though they had the effect of ensuring their destruction: they fought in close phalanx like the heroes they were; and only a scant remnant of their formidable force sought safety in retreat. Three entire legions were cut off in this sanguinary encounter; and the Roman power on the Rhine received a shock on that day which it never afterwards recovered. It was on hearing the fatal intelligence of this fight, that Augustus Cæsar is said to have exclaimed, in the deepest agony of grief, "Quinctilius Varus, give me back my legions."

The consequences of this victory were of the last importance to the Germans: it shewed them the advantages of combination, and taught them the strength that lay in union. Their foes, the Romans, too, were schooled by it not to despise any means for the destruction of such a formidable enemy. "Fearful are the Alemanni," says Tacitus, "when they fight together; but, combating singly, are they ever defeated." The Romans acted on this knowledge; and they, accordingly, set on foot intrigues of all kinds to foment discord and sow dissensions among them. This insidious policy was but too successful. The rulers, or chiefs, or dukes of the Heruscii, or Hârz-folk, at this period were Herrmann and Segest; those of the Hasuarii, or Hessians,

* The best-informed antiquaries place the site of this bridge at Weisenthurm, the part of the river subsequently crossed by Hoche, in 1797.

who lay between the former and the Rhine, Theutrich and Chattmer. The latter princes had two daughters, who were respectively betrothed to Gelhaar, or Flavius, the brother of Herrmann, and Sesistack, the son of Segest, his heir in the government of the Heruscii. The interests of both people appeared to be indissolubly bound together by this auspicious alliance; but a disseverance of it arose in a quarter from whence it could be least expected. Whether from caprice, which is not impossible, or political considerations, which is very probable, or love for the fair dame, which, after all, is the most likely, Herrmann brought down on himself the vengeance of Segest, by forcibly carrying off the beautiful Thusnelda, his daughter, against his consent, and excited divisions in the German camp by ravishing her from the arms of a neighbouring prince to whom she was on the point of being united.

The Romans had intelligence of those things, and they availed themselves of them to further their views of subjugation of the Germans. To the application of Segest, for aid to recover his daughter, Drusus Germanicus, who now commanded on the Rhine, lent a favourable ear; and, not content even with this, he despatched Cæcinna, his lieutenant, at the head of four legions, and five thousand auxiliary troops, into the Hartz country. This formidable force crossed the Rhine at Mainz, and, marching through the defiles of the Taunus, threw themselves between the Hessians and the Hartz-folk, so as to cut off any possibility of communication between them. They then laid waste all around them; among other acts of violence, destroying the ancient Matzen, the capital of the former people; and finally retired to Treves, but without effecting any great result.

On the first intelligence of the retreat of the Romans across the river, the Hessians fell upon the territories of Segest—the author of all this evil—like a furious whirlwind. They ravaged his lands; they destroyed or dispersed his people; they pillaged and burnt his towns; they spread desolation far and wide in the country of the Heruscii; and, finally, they besieged himself in his chief city, to which, in the extremity of his distress, he had fled as a last resource, and a final refuge. In this, his dire extremity, Segest again had recourse to the Romans; and again they despatched a force to his assistance. After many severe

encounters, the Hessians were defeated, and the beleaguered prince set free from his enemies. This victory gave the invaders a large portion of the right bank of the Rhine.

Among those who were liberated by this movement, was Thusnelda, the daughter of Segest, and the wife of Hermann. It is not related how she happened to be in her father's power, and separated from her husband; but such is stated to be the fact. She was then pregnant, by Hermann, of her first child. The will and wish of her sire was to separate her from him for ever; and to have the offspring of their union, if a male, brought up in sentiments of the strictest amity with the Romans. This he communicated to Drusus Germanicus; and it was settled by that prince to take place as he desired it. Accordingly, Thusnelda was removed first to Rome, where she was delivered of a son, whom she named Thumelich; and subsequently her abode was transferred to Ravenna, where a compulsory separation took place between her and her child. For his services against his country, Segest was rewarded by the conquerors with the sovereignty of the Hessians and the dominion of the right bank of the Rhine, from the Maine to the Sieg.

The grief and indignation of the bereaved Hermann, on learning the capture and deportation of his wife were indescribable; but still he did not waste his powers of mind and body in idle lamentations and unavailing regrets. On the contrary, he traversed the Hartz forest from one end to the other, every where exciting the inhabitants against their tyrants, and never neglecting to depict the treachery of his father-in-law in the darkest and most repulsive colours. The result of this expedition was unqualified success; there was at once a general rising in favour of freedom and fatherland, among the thousand liberty-loving tribes who then dwelt in the shadow of the ancient German forests; and the most active measures were accordingly set on foot to overthrow the Roman dominion on that side of the river. The insurrection soon became general all over Germany; and, in a short time, there was not a nation of any consequence, or a family of any fame, in that warlike people, who did not stand forth under the command of Hermann, in the defence of their common country. But the bravery of uninstructed troops like the Germans availed little against the disciplined steadiness of

their opponents, the Roman legions; and the forces of Germanicus, consequently, penetrated every where, from the Rhine to the Elbe, from the North Sea to the Weser. Hermann was defeated in all points, but with a fearful loss of life to the conquerors; and Germanicus returned to Rome to receive the honours of a triumph, and the poisoned cup of the assassin from his unnatural uncle, Tiberius, in reward for his unparalleled success.

In the meanwhile, Hermann, though defeated, was not dispirited, and, though often overcome, was never wholly vanquished. On the death or retirement of Germanicus from Germany, he drove out Segest, and seized upon his kingdom; and then, despite of all the efforts of the Romans, he maintained himself in it to the very hour of his death. His history, however, draws to a close. The withdrawal of Germanicus from the chief command on the Rhine gave a sort of peace to the native princes opposed to the Romans; a circumstance more fatal to the liberties of their country than a state of the most active warfare. During this period Herrmann and Markbot, chief of the Suabians, disagreed, and hostilities ensued between them. They met with their united forces, and fought a decisive battle; some say, on the plain which extends from Darmstadt to the Rhine; others, on the height above Coblenz, from whence its original name of Herrmanstein. The defeated prince sued for the assistance of the Romans, and speedily obtained it; he also plotted to such purpose as to engage Herrmann's own brother, Flavius, or Gelhaar, his uncle, Jugemar, his father's brother, his father-in-law, Segest, Adganbust, the son of Chattmer, his brother's father-in-law, and many other chiefs and princes, in a formidable conspiracy against him. It was successful, and he perished by their hands:—some say by means of poison, after the manner of his great antagonist Germanicus.

Thus fell Herrmann—the tutelary genius of German liberty—a victim to the malice of those he had saved—one of the noblest sacrifices ever offered up on the altar of human freedom. His most enduring epitaph is written by a foe. “Herrmann,” says Tacitus, “was incontestably the liberator of Germany. Never wholly conquered in battle, never entirely defeated in the field, his is the glory of resisting the Roman power, not as other

kings and princes did, in its infancy, but in its maturity, and when it had attained to its highest pitch of greatness. Seven and thirty years was the period of his life: twelve of his power. Still lives he in the songs of his native land, though unknown to the Greeks, who admired only their own heroes, and not too often alluded to by the Romans, who are either ignorant of the great deeds of the Germans, or envious of his glory."

" Sic transit gloria mundi."

But to return to the history of Ehrenbreitstein.

In the year of our Lord 358, it is believed that the Emperor Julian the Apostate erected a *castrum*, camp, or castle, on the spot now occupied by the formidable fortifications of Ehrenbreitstein. From that period to the present, it has continued to be the seat of power—an almost impregnable military stronghold. Little, however, is known of its local history for at least seven centuries subsequently; except that it almost always underwent the same fate as the city of Coblenz, which it sometimes watched over as a guardian genius, sometimes oppressed as a relentless foe.

Hillinus, bishop of Treves (A.D. 1169), erected the great tower of the old castle of Herrmanstein, since demolished; and also constructed an immense cistern, or reservoir, excavated principally in the solid rock, for the purpose of securing a supply of water to the garrison at all times, and on all occasions.

In 1503, however, the cistern was superseded by a well forty fathoms in depth, sunk by John of Baden, archbishop of Treves, at the same time that he added outworks to the castle, and fortified it more after the improved manner of that age than it had previously been. He is known in Rhenish history by the cognomen of Johannes à Petra, from this work.

The old castle of Ehrenbreitstein was destroyed according to the terms of a treaty, January 1642, after having been at various times occupied by the Swedes, the Spaniards, the French, and the Imperialists, in the course of the Thirty Years' War. It was, however, subsequently rebuilt.

The position of this fortress rendered it of the greatest

importance to the possessor in the French revolutionary war of the latter part of the last century ; consequently it became a first object of attack to the republican invaders, and of deep solicitude to the invaded. It was blockaded by the army of the convention, under General Marceau, September 1795, on their first passage of the Rhine ; and twice did it experience the same fate on the following year, with the addition of a bombardment from the adjacent heights. In 1797, it was blockaded again, immediately after the French troops had crossed the Rhine a second time, under the command of General Hoche ; and two years subsequently, it sustained a fifth siege by a French force, during the pending negotiations for the treaty of Rastadt. In the last blockade Ehrenbreitstein surrendered ; not, however, until a dreadful famine had nearly destroyed all its brave defenders, at the head of whom was the gallant Colonel Faber, in the service of the elector of Mainz. The capitulation and delivery of the fortress took place on the 27th January, 1799. Shortly after entering on its possession, the French commenced to erect new works, and strengthen the old positions ; but they too evacuated it at the peace of Luneville, on which occasion the fortifications were once more destroyed.

At the general peace in 1816, Ehrenbreitstein fell into the hands of the King of Prussia, who began afresh the erection of the ruined fortifications. Since then it has had lavished on it all the resources of skill and science. It is now, perhaps, one of the most impregnable military positions in the world.

OBERWÖRTH.

A few hundred yards higher up the Rhine than Coblenz and its companion Ehrenbreitstein, lies the lovely little island of Oberwörth, or Magdalenwörth, in the very centre of the river. This beautiful spot was formerly the site of a famous nunnery, founded early in the twelfth century (A.D. 1143): which was afterwards secularised, and subsequently destroyed on the cession of the left bank of the river to France, in the war of the first revolution.

Ages ago the following wild tradition respecting one of those hapless maidens, who died loving, but unmarried, within its walls, obtained wide currency in this vicinity.

THE DANCE O' THE DEAD.

The Freiherr von Metternich, who had his abode in Coblenz, early in the fourteenth century, was a proud and a haughty noble; and he thought no youth, of all those in the neighbourhood, good enough to aspire to his fair daughter's hand, or to enter into an alliance with his ancient family. But the pride of birth has been more than once abased by love; and the calculations of man have too often failed to be deemed infallible. The lovely Ida was his only child; she was gentle as the morning; but her heart had long been bestowed upon a noble youth, who, according to the customs of chivalry, served her father as esquire until he should win his spurs, and receive the honourable *accolade* of knighthood. Gerbert, such was his name, loved her in return with a love almost surpassing that of woman.

Their wooing was unknown to the haughty Freiherr von Metternich, and equally hidden from him was their betrothal. Ida and Gerbert swore eternal faith to each other long before her jealous sire discovered their tender inclinations. A wroth man was he when he made the discovery.

"It shall not be," he spake to himself, as he paced the splendid apartments of his palace; "it shall never come to pass; she must be placed with the good nuns until she forget him: and he—I shall send him a journey—a long journey."

The proud man smiled suspiciously as he repeated the last words; and it was easy to see that he meditated something evil to the object of his soliloquy. In a moment more he summoned his most trusty retainer, and they retired to his closet to hold private conference together. That night the young Gerbert, all unsuspecting of the storm then gathering over his devoted head, was despatched to the neighbouring castle of Labneck, on a mission to the provincial grand prior of the Knights Templars, who held his residence there; and in a few hours after his departure the fair Ida, his betrothed bride, was conveyed in silence

and in secrecy to the shore of the Rhine, and from thence transferred in a covered barque to the convent of Oberwörth.

The grand prior of the Templars sat in a lofty chamber of the Castle of Lahneck, as the youthful Gerbert was introduced to him by the obsequious servitor. He was a dark man, not young, nor yet old; but a heavy cloud — it might be of care, it might be of sorrow, it might be of crime, for his order had long acquired the character of unscrupulousness — rested on his furrowed brow, and gave a character of settled gloominess to his aspect. The burning sun of Palestine, which lent his cheek a darker hue, contributed also not a little to shadow the expression of his otherwise noble countenance. He sat alone, his head supported on his hands, his eye fixed on the ground; deep thought seemed to have taken full possession of all his faculties.

“I present you with this missive, sire;” spake Gerbert, approaching him, bending his knee submissively, “’tis from the Freiherr von Metternich, your ancient friend.”

The prior started at the words; the voice which uttered them sounded like an old familiar tone in his ear. He awoke from his reverie and looked on the youth; and again he started, as a man will do who beholds suddenly presented to his view the well-remembered traits of one long dead. He uttered no word in answer, however, but received the letter in silence from his hands. Hastily breaking the seal, he scanned the contents with intense eagerness, ever and anon looking up from the page to the face of the intelligent youth, who stood reverentially before him awaiting his answer. “Your name?” he abruptly queried, before he had entirely finished the perusal of the letter, “Your name? — Speak!”

“Gerbert von Isenburg.” •

“Your mother’s?” — asked the prior, with unwonted agitation.

“Guda von Isenburg,” replied the youth.

“Alas! alas!” exclaimed the prior, whom the reply seemed to agitate beyond all reasonable measure, “Alas! alas! and wo is me! how may I forget the past.” As he spoke, he wiped

away a burning teardrop which burst involuntarily from his suffused eye, and commenced to run its swift, scathing course adown his furrowed cheeks. "Alas ! alas !"

He motioned Gerbert to sit beside him, when he had in some sort mastered his deep and unwonted emotion ; and then he bade him listen. The youth obeyed without observation or comment ; but he was sorely surprised, notwithstanding, to see such a conflict of human feelings in the breast of one, the head of an order proverbially dead to every passion but that of an all-absorbing ambition.

"Know ye the contents of this missive, my son ?" asked the prior : "Know ye aught of my correspondent's desire ?"

"Nay, sire," replied the youth ; "I know naught of what it contains. I am no clerk to read such cyphers ; and it is no concern of mine, even an I were."

"But it is, my son," said the prior ; "it is concern of yours, and of vital import to you too."

Gerbert looked amazed at the Templar : his eyes asked that which his tongue could not bring itself to inquire of him.

"Hear me, my son," pursued the prior, "It asks me to contrive against your life ; it asks me to send you to the Holy Land, and to order it so there that you be placed in such a position of danger, that to survive, still less ever to return to our own fair land, would be utterly impossible. It requires me to do all this — villain that he is who asks it !"

The youth was quite thunderstruck at this dreadful intelligence ; still the truth of a heart which of itself knew no guile, made him hesitate in giving implicit credence to such a foul accusation against his master. When, however, the prior read the letter to him, word for word — when he heard from the lips of that dignitary, the whole circumstances of his love for the fair Ida — when he listened to the angry accents in which the tale of treachery was commented on by his newly found friend — and when he saw the fire of indignant rage which lighted up the sunken eye of that warrior priest, he could not choose but believe it, and give up his whole soul to the horrid conviction.

"But he shall be disappointed," said the prior, as he concluded the perusal, "he shall be disappointed. The child of

Guda von Isenburg shall never suffer ill while I have a hand to avert it from him."

Gerbert bent his eye full upon the face of the speaker, until it met his glance; there was in the look which he gave him, something of anger, mixed up with much of natural astonishment. "What means he," thought he the while, "by thus mentioning the name of my sainted mother? Why should her memory shield me from his complicity with my wicked master? or why should he seek to save me for her sake alone? I must know it."

The prior, who evidently saw what was passing in his *protégé's* mind, hastened at once to appease his excited feelings.

"My son," he proceeded, "well may it surprise you to perceive the interest I take in your fate; but your astonishment will cease when you hear how it has come to pass. Know, that I love you well enough to sacrifice ancient friendship, close connexion, and even in some sort the interests of the order which I serve, to protect you from the slightest harm. Listen."

Gerbert placed himself in an attitude of the most profound attention.

"It is a sad story," resumed the prior after a short pause, during which he seemed again a momentary prey to the most uncontrollable emotions; "A sad story for me, but soon told in words, though it has cost me a life-long agony to learn it. I loved your mother."

The youth started to his feet, and laid his hand on the hilt of his sword. The action was involuntary: his mother's fair fame was dearer to him than life; and it was therefore but natural that he should be stirred to wrath at the mention of her name, thus coupled with the word "love," from any mouth save that of his departed sire. The prior, however, waved him sternly to his seat, and went on with his interrupted narrative.

"I long worshipped your angel mother. She was the load-star of my life —

' My hope, my joy, my love, my all ' —

But alas! she did not return my passion. Days, months, and years, did I suffer in silence all the pangs of unrequited love: for I had never told to her the tale of my affections. I felt that

it would be to dissipate the dream of delight on which I lived : and I postponed prosecuting my hopeless suit until all chance of success had departed. We were neighbours ; our paternal towers were in view of each other ; our families were united in the bonds of old friendship and good fellowship for ages. Every day I saw your mother, and every day I only sorrowed the more ; for I could not take heart to declare my love to her. But why should I dwell on recollections which even at this distance of time — when toil and travel have bleached my hair, and bronzed my cheek, and changed my whole aspect — which even now, stir my heart within me, like the sound of the last trumpet, when the Spirit of God will cover the face of the earth and shadow the heavens ? ”

Gerbert listened to these passionate outpourings in silence ; but his heart gave them back its gentlest sympathies : for was he not also a hapless lover himself ? and how long might he not remain so ? Perhaps, for ever.

“ But, to conclude my story,” resumed the prior, recovering himself with the quickness of one accustomed to control his feelings. “ But to conclude. One day I rode over to the abode of your mother, resolved to know my fate. I had made up my mind to a declaration of my passion ; and I went to proffer my hand. As I rode slowly onwards, cogitating how I best might urge my suit, I was aware of a favourite page of the ladye of my love, who came galloping towards me on a fleet palfrey. We met : Oh God ! that I had died at the moment ! He told me that which now wrings my heart to remember ; — he told me that your mother was that very morning to be married to another, and that he was then actually on his way to my castle to bid me to the nuptial feast. If all the torments which human nature can conceive or inflict — if all the pangs which man has suffered, or may suffer, were concentrated into one, I do not think it could equal the feelings of utter agony which overcame me at this intelligence. My head reeled — my eyes swam — my limbs lost their strength ; — it was with difficulty that I could prevent myself from falling to the ground. I succeeded, however, in suppressing my emotions before the youth, and in assuming an air of grave unconcern. ‘ Here,’ said I to him, when he had delivered his message, ‘ take this ring and give it to thy ladye.

Then tell her that it was worn by one who loves her beyond life itself, and who renounces the world for her sake. In twenty-four hours from that time I was on my way to Palestine. That ring is now on your finger;—thence my recognition of you—a recognition, which your likeness to her who was my idol, and the similarity of your voice to her sweet voice, at once confirmed.”

The prior embraced the youth, who freely mingled his tears the while with those of the dark, bearded man that held him to his bosom.

“And now, my son,” pursued he, “we must provide for your safety first; your future success with the fair Ida we must leave to Providence. The Freiherr von Metternich is one of the best friends of our order; and to refuse acquiescence with his desires would be to infringe upon our canons, which declare that every thing is lawful to be done by us, which shall have the effect of strengthening our hold on the empire. But all these things I care not for, so I can serve the offspring of her whom I once loved and still love so fondly.”

“What may be done?” asked Gerbert. “It is an emergency, no doubt: but may I not combat my own way through it, so as not to involve you in any peril?”

“Nay,” replied the prior, “you may not; for you could not. Listen: you shall go incontinent to a distant commandery of our order, where the prior, who is a close friend of mine, shall take good heed for you. In the meanwhile, I shall watch over the safety of your ladye-love, and let you know the fitting time to return—if ever it arrive. Go, and God speed thee.”

The midnight hour had not chimed ere the youthful Gerbert, accompanied by a trusty knight of the Temple, was on his route to Suabia, whither lay his ultimate destination.

Twelve long and weary months had come and gone; and heavily, heavily had they moved to the thought of a hapless maiden, who dwelt within the sacred walls of the nunnery of Oberwörth; for they carried away hope with each hour, and brought back with them no happiness. This maiden was none other than the fair Ida von Metternich. On the eve of the day,

which, a year previously, had robbed her of her lover, she now lay a-bed, in her lowly cell, sick even to the death. The girl was dying : the vital principle had perished within her : and the ruthless sire, who now repented his cruelty, would have given worlds, had he possessed them, to restore her to that health of which his own fell act had deprived her. She lay extended on an humble pallet in the lowly cell allotted to her : the shadow of her former self ;—her only companion a middle-aged lay sister of the convent, whose duty it was to attend on the sick or ailing nuns.

“I feel that I am dying, Margarita,” spake the gentle girl to her attendant ; “I feel that this world is passing away from me — I feel — Oh God ! that I should say so — I feel that never more in this life shall I see him for whom I die—my own—my dear—my best Gerbert !”

“Sweet sister,” replied the good-natured attendant, “it is not seemly to speak so. ‘While there’s life there’s hope,’ the adage says ; and ‘many more unlikely things may come to pass.’ Worry yourself not, then, about the matter ; but leave the future to Him who orders all things for the best. In the meantime I’ll tell you a story — ’twill wile away your thoughts from your despair ; and teach you that nothing is hard or impossible to God.”

The pious sister then poured forth the following metrical legend, which still survives among the common people, in the rude rhyme and ruder dialect of the middle ages :—

“ Sir Conrad was weary, sore weary was he,
When he reined up his steed at a lone hostelrie.
‘ Step in, sir, step in,’ the lithe waiting-wench said ;
And her eyes, as she spake, danced with joy, in her head.
‘ Now maiden, young maiden, fair maiden mine,
Bring me a cup of your coolest wine :
And hostess, sweet hostess, come tell unto me,
Can this lovely creature your own daughter be ?’
‘ My daughter she is not, fair sir, be it known,
She’s but my handmaiden — my servant alone.’

‘ Then hostess, sweet hostess, an you give her to me,
This red gold be thine, and my bride shall she be.’

‘ Fair sir, she is thine, for thy offer so free,
Let her be thy bride, give the red gold to me.’

Now brought they Sir Conrad a foot-bath apace,
On the water were floating a-heap herbs o’ grace.

To pluck them the maid to the garden did go,
When a starling there whispered her, ‘ Woe, oh woe !

Alas to thee, bride, for thou wastest the feet
Of him who, as lover, thou never shouldst meet !

For sorrow to know it your father would die ;
For sorrow, beside him your mother would lie.

Alas ! to thee, foundling bride, and oh woe !
Father and mother of thine dost thou know ? ’

A heavy sad heart had that maiden so fair,
When back to the bedroom that bath she did bear ;

And as she stirred up the warm water to cool,
She wept like a fountain for her deep dool.

‘ Now, bride of mine, why weepest thou so ? ’
Sir Conrad thus spake, ‘ an I’m liked not, I’d know ? ’

‘ Oh ! thou art too good,’ then answered the maid,
‘ I weep but for what yonder starling hath said.

When to the gay garden for herbs I did go,
He sung in my ear thus, ‘ Oh woe ! oh woe !

Alas ! to thee, bride, for thou wastest the feet
Of him who as lover you never should meet !

For sorrow to know it thy father would die ;
For sorrow, beside him thy mother would lie.

Alas ! to thee, foundling bride, and oh woe !
Father and mother of thine dost thou know ? ’

Sir Conrad then looked on the bath at his feet,
The arms of the empire his eyes there did greet.

‘ That is my sire’s own ’scutcheon,’ said he ;
‘ How came this bath in a hostelrie ? ’

Then out sang the starling so loud and clear,
' Even in that bath they did bear her here :
Alas ! to thee, foundling bride ! and oh woe !
Where are thy father and mother, I trow ?'
Sir Conrad he looked on the maiden's sweet neck,
A mother-mole there her fair skin did fleck ;
And he cried, ' God greet thee, now sister mine—
Thy father is king by the broad bounding Rhine,
Christina the gentle is thine own mother,
And Conrad — I — I — am thine only brother.'
The maiden she knelt on her knees when he'd done,
And never rose from them till up rose the sun.
And she thanked her God, who had held her free
From the greatest of sins by such agency.
The cock crew out when the morning broke,
And the hostess beshrewed her, and thus outspoke :
' Arise thee, arise, you young bride, up there rise,
And clean ye the house, an ye wish to be wise.'
Then Conrad thus answered :—' No bride now is she,
And she cleans the house no more for thee.
But bring me a beaker, nay, start thou not so,—
I'll drink ye a stirrup-cup off ere I go.'
The hostess she brought him a brimming cup,
And thus spoke Sir Conrad, as he held it up :
' Now tell to me whence this fair maiden you have—
She's a king's own daughter—or naught may you save ?'
As pale as the wall that woman became ;
She guessed 'twas the starling that told of her shame.
' An infant,' she said, ' in a garden so gay,
Sat in yon bath, and was stolen away ;
This maiden it was, — by a gipsy queen,—
Who from that garden was stolen, I ween.'
Sir Conrad was wroth with such treachery,
So he cleft her skull—to the chine cleft it he.

Then he kissed his sweet sister, and she kissed him ;
Their eyes with the fond tears of joy were quite dim.
He sprung in his saddle, he sate her behind ;
Around his broad waist her white arms she did bind :
Upon her lap the foot-bath she bore ;
And in this guise to Worms they rode o'er.
At the palace-gate they encountered the queen,
She was a puzzled woman, I ween.
' Oh son ! sweet son ! what now may betide—
Bringst thou this maiden home as thy bride ? '
' No bride of mine shall ever she be ;
She is thine own Gertrude : now look ye and see.'
The maiden she down from the tall steed flies ;
Her mother she faints away with surprise ;
But when she came back to life again,
She embraced her dear daughter with might and with main.
' This very day 'tis fifteen years,' she said,
' Since from yon garden ye were conveyed.'
' Yes, they bore me over the rushing Rhine
In this foot-bath, sweet mother of mine.'
And as they thus spake in joyful mood,
The starling upon the window-sill stood,
And sang, ' Alas ! and my heart is sore,
Never a babe shall I steal, no more ! '
The starling's cage was that foot-bath free,
And the wires were the finest of gold you could see."

And now," said the kind-hearted sister, " cheer up—cheer up—
you see what strange things will sometimes come to pass."

" There is no hope for me," replied the dying Ida,—“ no
hope ! no hope ! I die unwed, though a betrothed wife. Alas !
alas ! for me ! ”

" Now, Heaven forefend ! ” exclaimed her companion, in
affright,—“ Heaven forefend ! Then you would be doomed to
dance the death-dance. Oh ! think not of dying until you are

wed, or, at least, until you have renounced the world and taken the veil. My poor sister was like you—wooed and all but wedded—never vowed to the cloister, and now—God be our guardian!—now she is to be seen—dead—dancing—God protect us!—the death-dance! Oh, my dear ladye! think not of dying. They dance in a choir on that herbless, verdureless spot, which stands in the centre of the island. You know it. And they are doomed to dance there every night until they meet a lover;—Heaven be gracious to the poor man!—And whether he be the lover they have left, or a stranger, 'tis all the same, they dance around him and around him, and dance him, and dance him, until they dance him down; and then he dies on the spot, and the youngest of the phantom-maidens makes him her own, and then she rests in her grave for ever after. Every night at midnight—I assure you that it is too true—they may be seen; their transparent forms flitting about, like rays of moonlight, over that accursed spot. I saw them once myself. All the powers of the church have failed to exorcise them. But it is not often that they get a victim. Their last was a young knight whose ladye-love, reft from him by paternal hands, died in these cloisters. He sought the island in the dead of night, and—he perished.”

The gentle Ida almost held her breath until the garrulous nun had concluded her strange story, listening the while to every syllable of the wild tale, apparently with the deepest interest. She then died. Her last words were coupled with her lover's name.

“Gerbert! Gerbert!” she sighed with her expiring breath, “we'll meet again!—Farewell!”

It was one of the wildest nights ever witnessed on the shores of the Rhine, the night of the day on which the gentle Ida von Metternich was borne to her last resting-place in the charnel-vaults of the convent of Oberwörth. The rain fell in torrents; the wind raged like a chafed lion, vieing in its terrible loudness with the thunder which ever and anon crashed as though heaven and earth were falling to pieces; while commingling with the voices of the storm, and occasionally rising even above that

doubled elemental strife, were still heard the roar of the surging river, and the dash of the heavy surf, lashed up into foam, or rushing along before the hurricane with an overwhelming power and fury. It was on this wild night that a man, weary, wasted, toil-worn, and lone, leaped on the shore of the little island of Oberwörth. He had loosened a skiff from its moorings, when he found that no sum could tempt the boatmen to risk the passage of the raging river; and he had daringly ventured across the stream in a storm which made the oldest mariner among them shudder but to behold. It was Gerbert,—Gerbert von Isenberg it was, who thus braved death to see his beloved Ida, before life had passed away from her for ever. Alas! alas! for the hapless youth. “Ill tidings travel fast,” says the adage, which was not belied in his instance. In the depths of Suabia, on the shores of the lake of Constance, had he learned that his ladye-love was dying; and, regardless of danger, in the depth of winter, amidst all the severity of the season, had he hurried thither to save her life, or expire in her arms. Alas! alas! for him; the life had left her full seven days before he reached Coblentz. The first greeting he received on entering that city was the account of her death; his first inquiry informed him of her funeral. Poor youth!

“Dead or alive, I’ll see her again.” It was thus he soliloquised as he struck into the heart of the island, and made for the glistening turrets of the convent, at its extremity, with rapid, irregular strides.—“Dead or alive,—ay, dead or alive,—I’ll see her once more, and, then ——”

Exactly central in the island, lay a circular plot of ground, on which no grass was ever known to grow, on which the dews of heaven never fell, and which seemed wholly neglected by that bountiful nature, so beneficent to all around it. This spot was believed to be accursed: by some, because of a murder, which tradition asserted to have been perpetrated there ages before; by others, because of a sacrilege and a suicide committed by a nun in the early period of the establishment of the convent. Of the first, it was stated that the victim was a confiding maiden, who trusted too much to her lover, and was requited for her confidence by death at his hands. Of the second, the story ran, that a young nun, tired of the cloister,

and having, moreover, her heart fixed upon a youth of Coblenz, broke her vows, and robbed the convent chapel at the same time ; and that on this patch of ground she deprived herself of life in a fit of insanity, induced, according to the legend, by sacrilegiously flinging away the host, which she had brought off along with the plundered vessels of the altar. But, whatever the cause might be, the spot was accursed ; and a perpetual blight seemed to rest upon it in all seasons of the year. This spot Gerbert had to pass on his way to the nunnery ; it was in a direct line with the little cove at which he had disembarked, the only landing-place on the island. As he approached it, rapt up in his own melancholy musings, he was suddenly recalled to consciousness by a rushing sound, in his vicinity, like to the whisper of very many voices. It was a sound which even the roar of the storm, or the rush of the wild waves, could not drown, so unearthly deep did it imprint itself on his ear, at the same time that it seemed so deadly low. Just at this moment, too, the wild wind whirled away a dense mass of clouds which darkened the face of the moon, and that beautiful luminary stood forth in the heavens—the queen of night—in all the splendour and brilliancy of her winter garniture. The youth looked up : and he started back in amaze. A troop of veiled maidens, garbed in long flowing robes of white, danced dimly before his eyes. One of the group detaching herself a little from the rest, and circling round and round him in a giddy whirl, approached by quick degrees the astonished Gerbert. She beckoned him to join her in the dance ; and the fascination she exercised over him was irresistible. He thought to see in the shadowy form which flitted before him, his own love, his dear, his lost Ida, and he rushed to clasp her in his arms. She mixed with the throng, —he followed her ;—the scene then changed. The troop of shadows closed around them ; they stood in the centre of the charmed circle ; they stood on that spot accursed of God and of man. There did they all dance to a wild, unearthly music, which whispered rather than played ; but still seemed to pervade the whole atmosphere of space with its harmonious sound. Round and round they danced ;—round, and round, and round. Gerbert and his partner turned, as it were, on a pivot ; they themselves the point on which the dancing troop also appeared to

revolve in the everlasting gyrations which they made around them. Quicker and quicker whirled the pale, white-garbed dancers;—quicker and quicker still whirled the bewildered youth and his veiled partner. “Fast and furious” grew the movements; the ample, flowing garments of the females expanded like the sails of a ship in a stiff breeze; the veils rose upwards from their faces; their long hair floated abroad in the wild, night-wind. Every moment the sensations of the youth became less vivid; every instant his perceptions grew more and more indistinct: the unceasing rotation confounded him; he could see or hear nothing save the unceasing sound of the supernatural music to which his death-like companions danced, and their faint transparent forms, as they flitted between him and the bright orb of the declining moon. He fell exhausted to the earth as the convent-bell tolled out the hour of one. As he fell, he was conscious of a rush in his ears like to the noise of a swarm of bees, and a flicker before the eyes like that of the lightning on a sultry summer’s night. He remained long senseless; yet he thought to retain a recollection of some after-scene; for his lost Ida, whom he affirmed to be the spirit that had danced with him, he said, stooped over him, taking his powerless hand in hers, and, imprinting a fond kiss upon his burning forehead, disappeared after the others.

Next morning he was found extended on the earth by the garden-servant of the nunnery; and he was quickly conveyed into the hospital of the establishment. The gentle sisterhood attended on him with all the assiduity of their natures, and all the benevolence of woman; but care and attention could do naught for him; he was too far advanced on his path to eternity to be recalled back to this life. He told what had befallen him in the intervals of his returning senses; and then lingered on until the evening fell upon the earth. That night he died.

NIEDER LAHNSTEIN ; CHURCH OF ST. JOHN.

On the right bank of the Lahn, just at its mouth, is situated the ancient church of St. John, now in ruins. The destructive influence of French democracy, as evinced by its armies in

ST JOHN'S CHURCH & LAENTICK CASTLE.
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the first revolution, extended itself even to this noble structure, during one of their earliest visits to the shores of the Rhine. It was ruined by them without any apparent cause.

It is of the cemetery of this structure, or rather of the point of marshy land lying at the confluence of the Lahn with the Rhine, which served, in days of yore, as the sole burial-place of sinners and individuals excommunicate of the church, that the following legend treats. Grave-yard, as well as ground unconsecrated, has long since shared in the common ruin of the church and its appurtenant foundations.

THE ONE LONE GRAVE.

Come, listen, gentles, while a tale I tell,
'Twill touch your tender hearts, I wist full well.
On yon bleak spot, washed by the Rhine's wild wave,
Apart from all, of yore, stood one lone grave;
One solitary tomb of rude stones piled,
Reared its dark form and frowned upon the wild;
And in its loneliness, sublimely grand,
Looked like the guardian spirit of that strand.
In vain the searcher seeks it now—'tis gone;
Ages ago its every trace hath flown:
There stands not of that antique pile a stone,
Too well the work of ruin hath been done.
'Tis of that tomb, and of these ancient times,
That I would tell ye in these tuneless rhymes;
And we will sit beside it, while they last,
And hold communion with the buried past.

Oh! who within that cold and cheerless cell,
Whereon the curse of man for aye doth dwell,—
Oh! who beneath that dark and dreary heap,
Whereon the blessed night-dew ne'er doth weep,
In gloomy grandeur all so sound doth sleep?
Some ancient hero, drunk with human gore?
Some tyrant whom no subject sighs deplore?
Some stalwart knight? some scion of high race?
Hath either found him here a resting-place?

Alas ! alas ! no hero slumbers here,
 Tyrants and chieftains have a haughtier bier :
 But two (alas ! I blush to breathe the name
 With which their kind have stigmatised their fame)
 Incestuous lovers ! even in death, forth sent
 By man—pure, spotless man !—to banishment.

Twin-born, from birth they had been separate ;
 And they but met to share one bitter fate.
 Stolen in her infancy from friends and home,
 The maiden had been doomed through youth to roam,
 Until adoption by a childless bride
 Had put a period to her wanderings wide,
 And left her store of wealth and land beside.
 She had been nurtured 'neath that burning sky
 Where thoughts and things assume a deeper dye ;
 And her dark, sun-rip'd cheeks with passion glowed ;
 And her bright eye, her heaving bosom, shewed
 Her love for him ; her —— what ? —alas ! alas !
 That such a blight o'er the young heart should pass,
 And kill it in its bud, before one flower
 Had sprung to blossom, in life's little hour——
 Her brother !

Why conceal the fearful crime ?
 Is not their sad tale on the page of time ?
 Hath it not left there such a deep-sunk trace,
 That nothing the black record may efface ?

He wooed and won her, from th' adoring crowd
 That low before in daily worship bowed :
 A sympathy, which neither sought to hide,
 Drew each to each, and —she became his bride.
 Bright summer saw them joined, as but one heart
 Between them beat —never to bide apart ;
 And then abandoned they those sunlit skies
 Where nature's radiance, night or day, ne'er dies,
 And for the ruder climates of the north,
 In bounding barque upon the seas put forth.

Soon o'er the deep up sprung a favouring gale —
And as love-breathed — filled their bellying sail.
From her tall bow that fleet ship flings the foam,
And, like a loosed bird, seeks her distant home ;—
That happy home, from which the hope of gain —
Vowed Conrad naught should tempt his steps again ;
And, when he 'd gained the broad Rhine's verdant shore,
No power should wile him thence for ever, evermore.

And now, some weeks of pleasing voyage past,
They reach the long-wished land they seek at last.
The joyous seamen fleetly furl the sails,
Each honest heart its happy fellow hails,
And warmly greets. Lo ! on the nearing strand
Parents and wives await, a thronging band ;
And blushing maidens too, with tearful eyes,
As tow'rds the shore the fleet barque swiftly flies.
Beside that group, pre-eminent, apart,
Her straining vision picturing forth her heart,
Conrad's fond mother—oh, how eager !—stood,
Watching that brave ship bounding o'er the flood.
Anxiety sat heavily on her brow,
Displacing hope—until upon the prow
Her loved son leaped, and shouted loud her name.
Then through her throbbing heart and thrilling frame
A thousand thoughts and feelings quickly move ;
And as they each to gain the mastery strove,
Her spirit's strength, which bore her up till now,
Failed in the fight ; and, like a sapless bough
Flung by the wild winds on the leafy soil,
When in the forest winter makes his moil,
Prone to the earth she fell.

Quick Conrad bore
The aged matron from the crowded shore ;
And soon, within their peaceful mansion's shade,
All that he loved around him he surveyed.
His infant haunts, his manhood's fond retreats,
The stream he sighed for, and the shadowy seats,

Where erst he mused, in solitude, upon
That power — that passion, love — then all unknown.
When night would find him in his dreaming mood,
Unscared by storms, unchanged in attitude.
Happy now was he, as a child at play,
For was not all around him bright and gay ?
Alas that ruthless fate, with stroke so fell,
Should crush for ever souls that loved so well !

And now, and now, alas ! alas ! my tale
Drags heavily ; my heart doth sink and fail :
To tell it well would need a spirit's wail.
Like matrons all, his mother sought to know
The history of her new-found daughter. Oh !
The bitter grief that such inquiries bring
Too often, and the gloom that they may fling
Upon a joyous prospect, fair and bright !
Why should they have the power to cloud such light ?
It was a tale eventful, vague and dim
As forms at eve, or faint, funereal hymn,
When darkness broods upon the earth all round,
And the thick air but seems t' obstruct the sound.
A tale of mystery. The maiden's youth
Was unremembered, save for a faint truth,
Which lingered in her mind's recesses — and
Which flashed more fully on her in this land
Where things familiar compassed her — or seemed
So much to do so, that she almost deemed
The dream dispelled which haunted her till then, —
The veil uplift, or torn.

“ Where, and when —
Where wert thou born, — where ? say,” the matron cried.
“ In sooth, I know not,” thus the blooming bride ;
“ But I have still imaginings of home,
From very childhood wont to me to come,
Even as spirits of air, or ocean deep,
And when they come I cannot choose but weep.
One is of a mother — mine, mayhap. Oh ! one
More like to thee than aught I've looked upon ; —

A form that o'er my infant cradle hung
 So fondly, and such mournful music sung
 In aftertimes,—a melting strain,—of love
 Which flourish'd fair, till envious tongues had strove,
 And not in vain, to separate two souls
 Entwined together as one."

A big tear rolls,
 A scalding drop, adown the pallid cheek
 Of her who strongly strives, but may not speak—
 That ancient matron. The young bride went on
 Thus with her story.

"She would gaze upon
 My childish countenance; and then anon
 Would kiss a mark I bore upon my breast,—
 A full-blown rose by Nature's hand impressed,—
 'Tis visible now;—and then she 'd sit and weep
 Over the couch whereon my brother's sleep
 Was deep and still."

The matron's heart was clave,
 Even as the earth is for a new made grave;
 And down she sunk beneath the strife of mind,
 Even as an old tree 'fore the angry wind.
 The bride, meanwhile, her bosom's snow laid bare,
 And shewed the mark which bloomed in beauty there,
 Contrasting with the whiteness of the skin
 Which lay all round, luxuriant,—as is seen
 The sun to tint the high and hoary peaks
 O' the Alps, before his slumb'rous bed he seeks.
 "Thou art,—thou art my daughter!" shrieked the mother;
 Thou art my child,—and Conrad is thy brother!
 Oh God! oh God! why should I live to see
 Such fearful thing shake all my faith in thee?
 He is thy brother—yes, thy brother;—I
 Mother!—your mother! Why did I not die?
 Why not with my departed husband sleep,
 Ere this dark day dawned on me?"

Death 'gan creep
 Through the young bride's pure blood, as reptiles pass,
 Leaving their slime upon the shrinking grass;

Her glance grew fix'd—her fair face pale—one groan,
And her sweet soul had from its dwelling flown.

And that sad man, the bridegroom brother—oh!
That virtue's shield should not defend from woe.
To see the good thus smitten, one might deem
That all he hears of Heaven is but the dream
Of some enthusiast!—What did that sad man
When o'er his heart this icy current ran?
When he beheld his late-loved bride, and—what?
His new found sister!—Oh the horrid thought!—
Bereft of life; a shade fell on his soul,
And straightways from his sight the world did roll.
A moment on her prostrate form he gazed,
Like one who dreaming walks and wakes amazed.
A moment, wildered, o'er her corpse he hung;
And a full tide of scalding tears, up wrung
From his heart's depths, upon it forth he poured—
Upon the cold, cold corpse of his adored.—
A moment on the blue and smiling sky
He then upturned his wild and wandering eye,
As though communing with those things of air,
Which legends tell us ever linger there;
Then slowly forth, he from his dwelling sped,
And ere night lapsed was numbered with the dead!

Thus perished they who, in that lonely tomb,
Abode, and listened long the wild wind's boom:
And yet slept soundly.

But why with their kind
Rest they not? Say, the grave is surely blind—
And the dark mould which covers corpses in
Presents a front impenetrable to sin.
Alas! alas! the virtuous of our race,
Had thrust them rudely from their resting-place
In yonder churchyard—consecrated earth—
As though one clay to all did not give birth.
Oh hypocrites!—And to this slimy shore
Consigned their cold remains for ever, evermore.

STOLZENFELS.

In the beginning of the fourteenth century, Stolzenfels, on the left bank of the Rhine, close by Coblenz, was one of the most formidable robber-fortresses on that river. It was then called Die Stolze Veste—The Proud Fortress.

Long before that period, however, a young knight, named Ottmar, dwelt there, in honour and esteem. His only companion was a beloved sister, named Williswind, whose virtue as well as her beauty was the theme of every tongue from Cologne to Strasburg. They had a stately retinue, as be seemed their quality: and nothing was absent from their castle which could increase the pleasures known at that period, and in the state of society which then existed. Human happiness, however, is not of long duration in any case. Perhaps it is well it should not: for as the poet truly sings,—

“ Spring would be but gloomy weather,
If we had nothing else but Spring.”

A war broke out between the Prince Palatine of the Rhine and the Count of Julich: and both sovereigns bestirred themselves to obtain the advantage in it. Ottmar, who owed allegiance to the former as a feudatory, was summoned to his banner; and he set out for the camp of his liege lord, on the

other side of the river, leaving the fair Williswind alone in Stolzenfels, protected only by some faithful servants of their father. It was a trying thing for one so young and so beautiful to be thus left to herself in those troublous times, when might was right, when power was paramount to justice, and when "the strong hand" was superior to all law. But she had been brought up all her lifetime in comparative solitude; and, haply ignorant of the ways of the world, and unknowing of the wickedness of men, she felt no fear of the future, and experienced no anxiety for her dangerous situation. A pet raven was her favourite companion. She had reared him from the egg; and he was now the participator of all her innocent pleasures. In her walks he was ever with her; when she sought the recesses of the tangled wood, or strolled among the fair flowers of the castle garden—herself a fairer flower than the fairest there—he was always hovering round her head, or hopping gaily after her; while ever and anon he would perch on her shoulder and pluck her ruffles, and croak when he wanted food, or wished to attract her attention to himself.

Two months passed quietly in this peaceful manner—in this unclouded and uninterrupted sunshine of the mind. At the end of that time, Ottmar, along with the other great vassals of the Palatine, re-crossed the Rhine; and that prince placing himself at their head, the whole army advanced towards the county of Julich. Williswind was rather grieved at her brother's departure for the seat of war; but she had such a strong presentiment of the protection of a gracious Providence, that her sorrow was comparatively slight. She confided in God, and she felt that he would not forsake her. "For," thought she, "if my brother fell, I would have no one to defend me from wrong; and the Maker of the world is too just to deprive one of support who never sinned against him, with a consciousness of so doing." Thus would she argue with herself; proving that "the wish is parent to the thought." Alas! poor girl, she knew little of the world; and less of the inscrutable ways of Providence. These arguments, however, had a good effect—they speedily restored her to her wonted serenity; and once more made the happiness of the heart that of all around her. Youth and deep sorrow are almost incompatible; they cannot coalesce together

in any thing like a cordial union. So it was with the fair Williswind. She grieved no more for her brother.

One evening in the autumn which succeeded his departure, a dark-looking wanderer, garbed as a pilgrim from Palestine, approached the castle gate and prayed a shelter for the night. He was at once admitted by the warder, and speedily seated in the warmest corner of the ample hearth, at the extremity of the hall, by order of Williswind. They all sat to supper together—mistress, servants, and strangers—as was the custom of that primitive period; and the pilgrim entertained them during its continuance with tales of his travels, of the wonders he had witnessed, and of the dangers he had passed through during his sojourn in Syria. It was not, however, without some apprehension, some undefinable feeling of dread, that Williswind entertained him; she looked with fear on his ferocious countenance, the naturally repulsive expression of which was greatly increased by the long black beard he wore; and she deemed his eye was far too free for a pious palmer, and his tongue much too loose for a holy man. He perceived it, and quickly changed his manner: but the impression was made, and could not be effaced; notwithstanding that he endeavoured to excite the tender-hearted maiden's sympathy by stories of his sufferings in strange lands, and of the pains and privations he had endured in his weary pilgrimage.

Williswind was unhappy while he stayed under the roof of the castle. She knew not why it was so; and deemed that she did the man injustice in attributing her uneasiness to him. But still she was restless, and ill at ease. Sleep visited not her eyes all that night; watchful and wistfully she paced up and down her apartment until the cold gray dawn became purpled with the warm rays of the rising sun. When the domestics were all astir at their respective occupations, then, and not till then, she sought her couch, and slumbered for a short period.

The pilgrim departed in due time; and the ladye Williswind, as was the wont of those days, accompanied him to the outer portal of the castle, and there presented him with the means of pursuing his journey. As she gazed from the gate after his tall receding form, until the projection of a piece of rock, which intervened between the castle and the river path,

concealed him from view, old Eberhard, the most ancient servant of her house, and who then filled the office of castellan, in the absence of her brother, approached her. Bowing reverentially, yet at the same time using the familiar expression which the rights of age gave him, he thus spake to the maiden :—

“Ladye,” he said, “I much misdoubt me that yon cowl conceals a villain.”

“Fye, fye, Eberhard,” replied she; “judge not so harshly. Besides, consider his holy calling.”

“The cowl does not make the monk,” pithily observed the old man.

“I shall not hear any one ill-spoken of who does not, to my knowledge, deserve it,” resumed the noble-hearted maiden.

“Well, well,” said the old man, “your ladyship shall be obeyed by me. But what the eye sees the heart believes.”

“What mean you, Eberhard?” asked Williswind, alarmed at the coincidence with her own feelings which appeared in this observation.

“Oh nothing, my ladye! nothing;” replied he. “But you remember the old nursery tale of ‘Reynard the Fox,’ who made a pilgrimage to Rome for absolution from the pope; and who persuaded the poor stupid ass and the silly sheep to bear him company, and carry him the greater part of the way.”

“But what bearing has your story on the present case?” inquired Williswind.

“You shall soon know, my ladye,” he answered.

“And how came such a thought into your head?” she continued, after a short pause, thus identifying her own suspicions with the old man’s paradoxical hints respecting the stranger.

“Why, thus,” answered he; “because I saw that yon fox, or wolf, in sheep’s clothing, or whatever he may be, with the ‘cockle-shell and sandalled shoon,’ took every opportunity, that he thought he could snatch unperceived, to pry into the state of the castle. But I noticed him though.”

“Surely this is nothing but your own suspicion,” exclaimed the maiden.

“Suspicion, or suspicion not,” replied the blunt old castellan, “I much doubt me that some attempt will be soon made on this castle. So we must not be taken by surprise.”

Williswind heard this prediction with a feeling of horror: but still she had such little knowledge of the wickedness of the world, that she could not persuade herself it could ever be fulfilled.

"We have no enemies," she said, "and the neighbourhood is at peace. Surely no one will harm us, who have not harmed them?"

"We shall see," observed Eberhard, shaking his hoary head incredulously. "We shall see."

Williswind concluded the conversation on her part by entering the castle: but the old castellan was observed to continue it, for a considerable time after she had left, garrulously talking with himself.

Very shortly after this circumstance had occurred it was forgotten by all but Eberhard.

Within a week, however, from the period of the pilgrim's departure, a knight armed cap-à-pie, and mounted on a large-boned, black charger, struck, early one morning, at the castle gate, and demanded admittance.

"I would fain see the lady Williswind," said he to the castellan; "I have that to say to her which she will do well to hear at once; my message brooks no delay."

Eberhard recognised immediately in the closely caparisoned rider, the wretched, weary, foot-sore, and houseless pilgrim of the preceding week.

"Ho! ho!" thought he; "you're come, are you? I thought so."

"Hind, that you are, tell your ladye quick my message," angrily exclaimed the knight, impatient at the old man's reluctance to admit him.

Eberhard proceeded at once to his lady's chamber, and told her all he knew.

"Admit him, Eberhard," said she; "as he is alone, he can do us no evil."

"But, stay!" she cried, as the old man proceeded to leave the room, "say I can only consent to hear what he has to say in your presence: on no other condition shall he have an interview with me."

The stranger strode into the bower a few minutes subse-

quently, and doffed his visor, as in duty bound, to the fair ladye. What was her surprise and horror when she perceived that Eberhard had not mistaken, and that it was in reality the pilgrim who stood in that disguise before her!

"Ladye," said he abruptly, "I come to woo ye. I would that ye were my bride."

Williswind was confounded. She scarce comprehended what he said.

"Ladye," he repeated, "what is your answer to my suit?"

"I am under the protection of my brother," replied she, a little recovered from her fright. "He is absent from the castle at present. When he returns you can speak to him on the subject. Press me no further."

"Is that your decided resolution?" resumed the dark-looking stranger.

"Yes," whispered she, very softly; for the sinister look of the man so terrified her that she durst not speak aloud.

"Well, well," was the reply, while a scornful smile sat on his countenance; "I know that women will have their own way. Farewell."

He departed. Williswind felt as if her heart was lightened of a heavy load when she saw his steed spring down the rocky path that led from the castle, and heard its hard tramp come fainter and fainter on her ear, until at length it died in the distance.

But still she was far from being at ease on the subject of the stranger's visit; and the old castellan too was equally suspicious of his intentions. They consulted together on the best mode of proceeding; and the result was, that Williswind determined to take refuge in a neighbouring nunnery, until her brother should return, or be apprised of her situation. Early next morning, accordingly, she set out, in company with her favourite maid and an old domestic, and took the road to the convent, which lay in the rear at some distance from the castle. As they pursued their way through a deep dark valley which intervened, they were suddenly encompassed by a body of men-at-arms, who had been in ambush there until their arrival. The old domestic, who made show of resistance, was slain at once: and Williswind, with her maiden, were hurried along to

a lonely tower, which stood on the summit of the highest rock that inclosed the valley. There they were immured. The stranger knight, who had been the day previously to the castle to woo her, and who, in the garb of a pilgrim, had partaken of the hapless ladye's hospitality, was the leader of this band, and the cause of all her grief and misery.

"Here," said he to the despairing Williswind, "here you shall rest for the present. In three days I come again, to learn your answer to my proposal of marriage."

Saying this, he fastened the grated door of their living grave, and left them alone. Laughing like a fiend, he loudly congratulated himself on the success of his hellish project, and then departed.

Poor ladye! what did she not suffer! Her heart sunk at the idea of being in the power of such a monster. On her knees, with outstretched arms, she implored mercy of her captor, and prayed earnestly for the assistance of Heaven: but Heaven itself seemed to be heedless of her prayers; and the ruffian ravisher was deaf as the rock to her tears and entreaties. As she looked up, however, to that heaven which seemed to have abandoned her to the dominion of this wretch, she beheld, with feelings of no common delight, her favourite raven: and, with the unaccountable mutability of the human mind, her heart was at once filled with hope and rejoicing. She accepted it as a good omen. The faithful bird had followed her footsteps unknown to all, and unnoticed even by her in the confusion of her departure from the castle, and he now sat perched on a fallen pillar of the gateway before the tower. When he caught a glance of his mistress's face at the grating of her dungeon, he flew to her with all that eagerness of delight which inferior animals are wont to manifest at seeing those they love; but not being able to obtain an entrance through the close-arrayed bars, he pecked at them with all his might, as though he would force his way into the bosom of his lady. His efforts, however, were all in vain; a fact which he soon learned to appreciate. Finding that he could not gain access to her, he flew to the neighbouring thickets, and from thence brought, time after time, to the grating of his mistress's cell, the sweetest wild berries which the woods produced. By this means she and her maiden lived during the

three days of their imprisonment, and suffered naught from hunger or thirst ; though their cruel and remorseless captor had left them without food or drink for that period, in the hopes of more effectually subduing the lady Williswind to his will. Thus did Providence watch over her when she least deemed of its protection. Weak and wilful beings that we are !

The third dreary day drew to a close, as the dark knight again made his appearance at the grating of their dungeon. He repeated his proposal : and Williswind repeated her refusal. She felt inspired by Heaven ; and she was now conscious that she would not be forsaken by God.

“ At all events,” thought she, “ the worst fate is better than to be his bride.”

“ Will you, or will you not ? ” shouted the ruffian, enraged to the last pitch by her obstinacy,—as he deemed it.

“ Never ! ” replied Williswind, looking resignedly upwards,—“ never ! ”

“ Well, then, bide there and perish ! ” were his words.

So saying, he rushed from the portal and was quickly lost in the thick foliage of the forest. That night she slept in peace. It is strange how the most dreadful certainty shall leave the mind more calm than the most trifling uncertainty or doubt on any subject whatsoever.

Early next morning she awoke, refreshed and inspirited, and took up her station at the grating of the dungeon. There she found her faithful raven ; and an abundant supply of fruits and wild berries provided by him for their matutinal meal. As she gazed wistfully, and not without hope, on the wide prospect before and around her, she thought she perceived, in the distance, the form of a man. She looked again—she was not deceived ; for, immediately after, the deep tones of a masculine voice, borne on the breeze of the morning, struck distinctly on her ear. Could it be her persecutor ? Had his heart relented ? Was he about to compensate for the injuries he had done her by setting her at large ? These were the thoughts that passed through her mind, as she strained her eyes to catch an occasional glimpse of the approaching form, ever and anon concealed by the sinuosities of the mountain-path, or the intervention of clumps of trees and masses of rock and foliage. Every nearer view, however, only

served to convince her that these suppositions were less and less founded on truth.

She cried aloud for help, and the valleys echoed back the sound. Her cry was not unheeded. A young knight was now visible, galloping rapidly up the steep hill on which stood the tower where she was confined. She waved a white kerchief from the grating;—his speed was redoubled;—the noble steed which he bestrode seemed to partake of the impatience of his rider;—a few bounds, and they were on the bit of green sward before her dungeon door.

“Ottmar!”

“Williswind!”

Need it be told that it was her beloved brother, whom Heaven had thus almost miraculously sent to her rescue?

At this interesting moment a third party made his appearance. It was the ruffian stranger. A few words sufficed to tell to Ottmar the tale of his atrocity: a few moments more were all the time he had to live on this earth. Ottmar attacked him with all the ardour which a good cause inspires: and the stranger defended himself as though he were paralysed by fate. He fell, cloven to the chine, by the heavy glaive of the enraged brother.

As he lay on the earth, the sky immediately over him became on a sudden completely darkened. Ottmar involuntarily looked up. Wondrous to behold, he recognised Williswind's pet raven at the head of a host of other birds, hovering over the prostrate villain. In another moment they had descended on the corpse, and attacked it at all points: some picked out his eyes, others lapped his warm blood; some mangled his hands and face with their sharp beaks; while others, again, pulled his garments to pieces to get at his bare body.

Ottmar tore the keys of the tower from the girdle of the dead ruffian, and at once liberated his sister and her maiden. Then, setting them side by side on his steed, he led them in safety over crag and cliff, through dell and valley, to Stolzenfels. There was great rejoicing made for her happy deliverance and his fortunate arrival.

Williswind was not left much longer without an efficient protector; for, with her beloved brother's consent, she shortly

after espoused one of the most powerful barons on the shores of the Rhine.

Her pet raven was honoured with an effigy over the gateway of the castle; and his memory is held in grateful remembrance to this day by the simple peasantry of the adjacent district.

Stolzenfels is celebrated, in subsequent tradition, as the scene of an alchymical cheat practised upon Werner, archbishop of Triers, who resided in it for a considerable period of his reign (A.D. 1388–1418). Werner was a poor man and a superstitious; he was, moreover, very much addicted to studies then denounced as magical. The expensive wars carried on by his predecessor, Kuno of Falkenstein, had exhausted the archiepiscopal treasury; and the witless prelate set about replenishing it by occult means. To this end he invited to Triers the most celebrated alchymists of the age; and spent all his time, and much of his remaining treasure, in making experiments on the projection of gold, and the production of the philosopher's stone. The result was ruin to the fatuous ecclesiastic. The pope, at the instance of the canons of Triers, silenced him, and appointed a coadjutor to perform his clerical duties. He died, it is said, in Stolzenfels: and the rumour ran that he left immense sums of money buried in its dungeons.

That this rumour was very prevalent, and not at all discredited, even by those who should have known better, is proved by one remarkable fact. John of Baden, Archbishop of Triers (A.D. 1456–1503), who re-edified Ehrenbreitstein, and proved himself one of the ablest princes that ever sat on the throne of that diocese, permitted himself to be persuaded of it by an Italian priest from Apulia, and, accordingly, set about excavating the vaults of the castle. He found nothing, however; and had only his expense and pains for his reward. This prelate, too, was addicted to alchymy: and he maintained a cheating Croat, for twelve years, for the purpose of discovering the mode of making gold and of perpetuating existence.

Stolzenfels is now undergoing the process of re-edification; and, perhaps, before these sheets are published, it will be completed as a residence.

LAHNECK.

On the right bank of the Rhine, a little inward from the river, and overlooking the Lahn, which flows at its foot, stands the ruined castle of Lahneck. This formidable structure was erected in the year of our Lord 900; and it was presented to Hatto, archbishop of Mainz, a few years afterwards, by Oda, the wife of Arnulf, then emperor of Germany (A.D. 900–913). Hatto, of whom there is much to be said in a future part of the work, made it the boundary fortress of his diocese; and the gift of the empress to the see of Mainz was confirmed by a decree of Otto the Second, dated A.D. 978. The ancient edifice, however, fell into decay; and it became necessary to erect a new one in its stead. This was done by Dietrich, or Theodoric of Erpach, archbishop of Mainz (A.D. 1434–1459). The ruins of that structure are those which now strike the eye of the voyager on the Rhine.

Lahnstein, Branbach, Rhens, and Capellen, were the boundary points where the archdioceses of Mainz, Treves, Cologne, and the palatinate of the Rhine, met together. Branbach appertained to the palatinate, as will be shewn further on in these pages; Rhens was in the archdiocese of Cologne, as we shall see hereafter; Capellen belonged to Treves; and Lahnstein was, as it has been above stated, from time immemorial in the possession of Mainz. Between these four places in the middle of the Rhine, a spot was well known in the middle ages, by means of admeasurement from the respective shores, where each of these princes, sitting in their own boats, could hold converse with one another without stirring out of his own dominions.

It, however, appears that Lahneck passed out of the power of the Archbishop of Mainz, by what process is not known in the lapse of ages. If the following tale be true, there can no doubt exist of the fact.

THE LAST OF THE TEMPLARS OF LAHNECK.

Popular tradition states that the proud castle of Lahneck was once a fortress of the powerful Order of the Temple; and there is a story connected with it at this period of its history which is not altogether without interest. Before it is related, however, it may not be amiss to say a word or two of that famous order and its fearful fate.

There are few readers of history wholly unacquainted with the rise and progress of that celebrated fraternity of nobles and gentlemen, once the bulwark of Christendom: but the sad tale of their fate—their decline and fall—seems, generally speaking, to be almost entirely forgotten, or wholly unknown.

From the period of the fall of Acre (A.D. 1290), it is stated, by an industrious historian of the Crusades: *—"The Holy Land

* James's Hist. of Chivalry. Cap. xv., p. 312; *supra*.

had become a place of vice and debauchery, as well as a theatre for the display of great deeds and noble resolution. And we find," he continues, "that, however orderly and regular any army was on its departure from Europe, it soon acquired all the habits of immorality and improvidence, which seemed some inherent quality of that unhappy climate. This was peculiarly apparent in the two orders of the Hospital and the Temple, the rules of which were particularly calculated to guard against luxury of every kind: yet the one till its extinction, and both during their sojourn in Palestine, were the receptacles of more depravity and crimes than, perhaps, any other body of men could produce. After the capture of Acre, the knights of these two orders retreated to Cyprus; and when some ineffectual efforts had been made to excite a new crusade for the recovery of Palestine, the Templars retired from that country, and, spreading themselves throughout their vast possessions in Europe, seem really to have abandoned all thought of fighting any more for the sepulchre. With the rest of Europe they spoke of fresh expeditions, it is true; but, in the meanwhile, they gave themselves up to the luxury, pride, and ambition, which, if it was not the real cause of their downfall, furnished the excuse. Philip the Fair, of France, on his accession to the throne, shewed great favour to the Templars; and held out hopes that he would attempt to establish the order once more in the land which had given it birth. But the Templars were now deeply occupied in the politics of Europe itself; their haughty Grand Master was equal to a king in power, and would fain have made kings his slaves. In the disputes between Philip and Boniface the Eighth, the Templars took the part of the pope, and treated the monarch in his own realm with insolent contempt; but they knew not the character of him they had roused. Philip was at once vindictive and avaricious, and the destruction of the Templars offered the gratification of both passions; he was also bold, cunning, and remorseless; and from the vengeance of such a man it was difficult to escape. The vices of the Templars were notorious, and on these it was easy to graft crimes of a deeper die. Reports, rumours, and accusations, circulated rapidly through Europe; and Philip, resolved upon crushing the unhappy order, took care that, on the very first vacancy, his creature, Bertrand

de Got, archbishop of Bourdeaux, should be elevated to the papal throne.* Before he suffered the ambitious prelate to be elected, he bound him to grant five conditions,—four of which were explained to him previously, but the fifth was to be kept in secrecy till after his elevation. Bertrand pledged himself to all these terms; and as soon as he had received the papal crown, was informed that the last dreadful condition was—the destruction of the order of the Temple. He hesitated, but was forced to consent; and after various stratagems to inveigle all the principal Templars into France, Philip caused them to be arrested suddenly throughout his dominions; and had them arraigned of idolatry, immorality, extortion, and treason, together with crimes whose very name must not soil this page. Mixed with a multitude of charges, both false and absurd, were various others too notorious to be confuted by the body, and many of which could be proved against individuals. Several members of the order confessed some of the crimes laid to their charge; and many more were afterwards induced to do so by torture: but at a subsequent period of the trial, when the whole of the papal authority was said to give the proceeding the character of a regular legal inquisition, a number of individuals confessed, on the promise of pardon, different offences, sufficient to justify rigorous punishment on themselves, and to implicate deeply the institution to which they belonged.” So far the historian. A more detailed account of their arrest, may, however, be read with advantage, inasmuch as it will first tend to prove the duplicity of their principal prosecutor, Philip, and then to give them the benefit of his bad character.

Clement the Fifth at this time resided in Avignon, under the complete control of his patron, Philip; and it was there that the plans of the king against the Templars were concocted. Under pretence of consulting with him, and the heads of the order, on a contemplated crusade, the pope required the attendance of Jacques de Molay, the Grand Master, and as many of its dignitaries as could accompany him, to Avignon (A.D. 1306). Undeterred by the rumours of danger which met them at every step of their journey, they proceeded from Cyprus thither.

* Under the title of Clement the Fifth, A.D. 1305.

Philip, and his minion the pope, received these hapless men with every outward demonstration of friendship and esteem ; nay, the former selected the Grand Master as sponsor for a babe of the blood royal, then about to be baptized. But all these were only so many blinds to mask their real intentions ; for, on the 13th of October, 1307, the Grand Master, and every one of the knights of the order in France, were simultaneously arrested, and all their fortresses and commanderies seized by order of the treacherous monarch. Jacques de Molay, and the chief knights, were immediately transferred to Paris ; and there in the Temple, their own house, were tried for the various crimes previously alleged against them.

“The Knights Templars,” says a trust-worthy, pains-taking historian,* “if their judges be worthy of credit, were a set of men who insulted the majesty of God ; turned into derision the gospel of Christ ; and trampled upon the obligation of all laws human and divine. For it is affirmed that candidates, upon their admission to this order, were commanded to spit, as a mark of contempt, upon an image of Christ ; and that, after admission, they were bound to worship either a cat, or a wooden head covered with gold. It is further affirmed that among them an odious and unnatural crime was a matter of obligation ; that they committed to the flames the unhappy fruit of their lawless amours ; and added to these other crimes too horrible to be mentioned or even imagined.

“It will, indeed,” he impartially proceeds, “be readily allowed that in this order, as in all the other religious societies of this age, there were shocking examples of impiety and wickedness ; but that the whole order of the Templars was thus enormously corrupt is so far from being proved, that the contrary may be concluded from the acts and records, yet extant, of the tribunals before which they were tried and examined. If to this we add, that many of the accusations against them flatly contradict each other, and that many members of this unfortunate order solemnly avowed their innocence while languishing under the severest tortures, and even with their dying breath ; it would seem probable that King Philip set on foot this bloody tragedy with a view to gratify his avarice, and glut his resentment

* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Cent. xiv., cap. v. sect. 10.

against the Templars ; and especially against their Grand Master who had highly offended him."

The principal agents in the prosecution of the accused were the Bishop of Sens, a creature of the king's, appointed grand inquisitor by the pope for the occasion, and the monks of the order of St. Dominic, a body of fanatics devoted to the papacy, and mortally hating the Templars. The result of the trials was the condemnation of Jacques de Molay, grand master of the order ; Guido de Penaldo, grand prior of Normandy, a venerable man of eighty years old ; and fifty-nine of the most powerful and distinguished knights, who were all sentenced to suffer death by the punishment of a slow fire. They were executed accordingly, the 18th of March, 1314, on the little island in the Seine at Paris, where subsequently stood the statue of Henry the Fourth. A papal edict, extinguishing for ever the order of the Temple, quickly followed this fearful sacrifice ; and thus the last prop of chivalry was for ever annihilated.* The grand master and grand prior stoutly defended their order on their trial, and loudly asserted their innocence at the stake. When the flames were ascending around them, and death in that most fearful of all forms flitted before their eyes, their last words were a solemn citation of King Philip, and the pope, his creature, to appear before the judgment-seat of God : and within a year both princes followed their victims to the grave.

With equal promptitude, but not with like rigour, was the papal edict for the suppression of that once all-powerful order followed up in all the other kingdoms and states of Europe. The tradition which ensues has relation to that proceeding in the archbishoprick of Mainz. Peter von Aichspalt, at one time principal physician to the Count of Luxemburg, then filled the archiepiscopal chair of that important diocess. He had been invested with that dignity by Clement the Fifth, in gratitude for curing him of a dangerous malady, at Avignon, when the skill of all other physicians had failed ; and he was, therefore, altogether at the beck of the pope his benefactor. When the fatal decree of extinction was fulminated against the Templars, he prepared at once to put it into execution in his

* Mosheim says that the whole order was extinguished by the Council of Vienna, A.D. 1311. He is good authority as to dates.

territories; and, accordingly, he issued strict orders that they should renounce their vows, and resign into his hands their possessions, or abandon altogether the principality. Disobedience to this mandate was threatened with the punishment of fire and sword; and the fate of the unfortunate grand master and the French knights was pointed to as certain to be the fate of those who refused acquiescence. A great number of the knights yielded to a destiny which they deemed inevitable, and either renounced the order, or abandoned the archbishoprick: but the legend tells us, that twelve of the most ancient and noble among them, despising at once the power of the pope, and the malice of the potentates his minions, threw themselves into the strong castle of Lahneck, and there took oath to one another to die rather than yield to their persecutor and oppressor.

Peter von Aichspalt was an angry man when he heard tidings of this act of the Templars, and his brow blackened with rage at the thought of his power being defied by such a handful of men. He despatched two thousand of his bravest soldiers against them, commanded by one of his best and most experienced captains; and he issued the strictest injunctions to take the castle, and capture or destroy the knights who defended it, at any risk and at whatever expense.

The brilliant sun of a bright autumn day was sinking in glory behind the Taunus Mountains, when the troops of the Archbishop of Mainz took up their position in front of the Castle of Lahneck. Their commander having first secured all the passes by which escape was possible, sent a herald to the portal with a summons to the knights within the walls.

"Surrender ye!" said the messenger, "in the name of the Emperor and the Archbishop of Mainz. Make clear the castle in one hour, and I offer you life and limb; delay longer, and you die. God preserve the emperor and the archbishop!"

The herald was at once introduced to the chief of the knights by those who kept watch at the outposts; and to him he repeated his summons of surrender.

"Tell your leader and those who sent you—and let it be repeated by them to the proud archbishop and the false emperor—that we fight for our honour and our right, and that we will preserve them or die. Say, also, that we never will quit this

castle with our lives ; but that if we are left in peace, we will remain so. Go, in God's name, and do thine errand ! ”

Thus spoke the noble old knight, his head bleached with the snows of seventy winters, who had been unanimously elected by this intrepid little band as their master and chief.

“ We fight for our honour and our right,” spake each knight solemnly and in succession, “ and we will preserve them or die ! ”

The herald departed. Shortly after the onslaught commenced. But though the disproportion of force between the assailed and the assailants was fearfully great in point of mere numbers, the strength of the castle and the high-souled courage of its few brave defenders more than counterbalanced it for a considerable period. Night found the fight still raging under the walls, without the archiepiscopal troops being able to effect an entrance at any point, while their numbers were considerably thinned by the well-directed missives of the besieged, and their spirits greatly depressed by such unexpected as well as such formidable opposition.

“ This will never do,” said the leader of the besieging host, as in the darkness he withdrew his forces from before the castle. “ It must not be said that twice a thousand men are set at naught by twelve. Call me the captains of companies.”

A council of war was then held, and it was agreed that an assault and escalade should be made at midnight. All was in readiness accordingly at the appointed hour.

The night, with a mutability common to the season, had set in lowering, and long ere the castle-clock had struck twelve, it rained heavily, and blew a perfect hurricane. This was so far favourable for the assailants ; but, to make it still more so, the midnight was pitch-dark.

“ March ! ” whispered the leader to the captains.

“ March ! ” whispered the captains to their men.

In silence they gained the castle-walls ; in silence also they attempted to scale the only point where a ladder could be planted. It was deemed that the knights, exhausted by the fatigues of the day, would never think of attack in the dead of the night ; and it was, therefore, calculated, that the castle might be taken by *coup-de-main*, without bloodshed or loss of life. But

they had reckoned without their host. The enemy they had to deal with was too vigilant to be surprised asleep; and the first man that reached the battlements was flung over as by an invisible hand into the yawning chasm of crag, far, far below. A second, a third, a fourth—in short, a crowd followed in succession, and met the same fate.

“For God and our right!” exclaimed the heroic Templars, as each new victim was added to the dreadful account.

The assailants were terrified, and would fain have fled.

“Once more,” shouted their leader, “follow me.”

They rushed impetuously onward: several of the knights fell before them. The outer works of the castle were carried; Four of its brave defenders, all that were left alive, retreated to the inner part of the fortress. It was then the gray of the morning; the fight had lasted all through the darkness of the night. Three of the four soon fell on the drawbridge; their corpses cumbered the path. The fourth, their aged chief, stood in the narrow footway—his gray hair streaming in the chilly breeze—his gory glaive dealing death wherever it lighted. A hundred lances were levelled against his breast—a hundred swords thirsted to drink his life-blood; but still he was all unharmed of them, and stood aloft in his loneliness, the impersonation of bravery and destruction.

“Surrender! surrender!” shouted the assailants.

“Honour and right!” cried the aged hero.

“Farewell! beloved brothers,” said he, addressing the dead and dying knights at his feet, “we’ll meet once more. Better die thus than at the stake, as our noble grand master and the best of our dear brethren did, by the treachery of a king and the hatred of a priest. Farewell! We’ll soon meet.”

The battle raged with unabated fury; the foremost of those who pressed on the bridge fell before his sword like corn under the sickle of the reaper; the rest hung back in fear and affright, like a pack of yelping hounds before a stately stag at bay.

“Sir Knight,” spake the leader of the archiepiscopal troops, advancing to the front of the passive throng, “in God’s name, surrender. You have done your duty; you have performed prodigies of valour. Such a man must not meet the death

inevitable, if you persevere. Give me up your arms, and depart hence in peace."

It might be compassion, or it might be policy, which dictated this speech; but whatever the motive, it had the same effect.

"Never," cried the old knight,—“never shall I surrender more than my brothers. With them have I lived, with them shall I die. Honour and right are our watchwords; and for them will I fight to the last.”

“Honour and right!” he exclaimed, as he struck down, at two blows, two of the most daring of his assailants; and the same words were a sure presage of death to two more who succeeded.

“A truce! a truce!” shouted a thousand voices in the rear.

There was an immediate pause; even the hoary champion of the Temple rested a moment from the work of slaughter, to know what it meant.

A herald on a foaming horse came dashing up the precipitous path to the gate of the castle.

“A truce! a truce!” he shouted. “I come from the emperor with peace and pardon.”

“Peace and pardon from the emperor,” echoed the host.

The Templar stood unmoved, his dripping blade raised aloft in the act to smite the first who advanced towards him.

“Cease!” cried the leader of the opposing force.

The herald alighted, and delivered to him his credentials.

“Sir Knight,” said he, when he had glanced at their contents, “here is peace and pardon. The emperor in his august clemency gives back to thy order the goods they are at present possessed of, to have and to hold till death. Honour and right are now thine. Sheathe thy sword. The emperor give thee grace.”

“Hurrah! hurrah!” shouted the overjoyed troops.

“Honour is ours,” replied the old knight solemnly; “but pardon I wot not of. Grace is with God alone; not with man. That experienced to their cost our noble grand master and our beloved brethren, allured to France from their far-off

homes in fair Cyprus. I fight for honour and right, and for them shall I die! Keep clear!"

He waved his gory glaive, and again two of the foremost fell before him; two more followed, and shared the same fate. The troops now became exasperated; they stormed and raged like wild beasts: but the undaunted old man still stood calm and unyielding, dealing out death on every side.

"Yield ye, or die!" shouted the leader of the assailants, springing forward on him.

"Well met," said the Templar. "For life or for death."

In a second they were locked in each other's deadly grasp. For some moments the dreadful struggle between them was equal. The grand attack was suspended; and all men held in their breath to watch its issue. No word was spoken by either party. The leader of the archiepiscopal troops was young, and strong, and brave; but he had to deal with one who had grown old in strife, and who was master of all its manifold stratagems. They tottered—they advanced—they receded: the object of the former was evidently to get the old man under; but the object of the latter could not be so clearly divined. At length the aged knight leaned an instant, as in weariness, or to draw breath, against the broken balustrade of the drawbridge; his stalwart arms still, however, compressing his adversary in their unshrinking gripe.

"Yield thee! yield thee!" cried the leader, "yield thee, or die!"

"Honour and right!" were the only words the Templar uttered, as throwing himself over the bridge with a sudden jerk, he carried his opponent with him.

They were dashed to pieces on the rugged rocks below.

Thus perished the last of the Templars of Lahneck.

RHENS.—THE KÖNIGSTUHL.

The town of Rhens, on the left bank of the Rhine, is small and mean, and it has never been otherwise in the memory of man; yet in all Germany there is not, perhaps, a single spot where transactions of greater importance to the empire took

place, or which is more noted in the history of the middle ages. The celebrity of Rhens, however, does not arise from any thing incidental to itself, or its inhabitants, past or present, but from the circumstance of the Königstuhl, or Royal Throne, having been situated close by it.

The Königstuhl, or Royal Throne, stood on a little hill adjacent to Rhens, and for ages formed an object of wonder and reverence to the German people. Though but a small structure, it covered a portion of four principalities—the archdioceses and electorates of Mainz, Treves, and Cologne, and the palatinate of the Rhine. It was a plain octagon building, consisting of a frieze supported on eight pillars, with a ninth pillar in the centre. It had a flat roof, on which were placed seven stone seats for the seven electors, and one raised above the rest, in the middle, for the emperor. The ascent to this platform was by fourteen stone steps, on the south side of the edifice. On each seat were emblazoned the arms of the electorate to which it appertained; and on that of the emperor were painted those of the empire.

On this platform some of the weightiest deliberations of the empire were held, and some of the most important decisions arrived at. On the election of Henry the Seventh, of the house of Luxemburg, A.D. 1308, his accession took place at this spot; and in the records of that event, it is alluded to as an ancient and long-established custom pertaining to the place, that the Emperors of Germany were uniformly chosen there. The first historical mention of Rhens and its locality is to be found in a work of that era;* but that does not at all detract from its antiquity, as its existence and privileges seem to have been recognised for a long period previously.

The reign of Henry the Seventh was not inglorious nor unprofitable for the empire, though it sustains, in history, the

* "In Gestis Balduini Archiepisc. Trevir." The passage in which allusion is made to Rhens runs thus:—"Dominus Baldewinus, alique sex collectores, villam Rense inter Confluentiam et Boperdiam sitam—ubi ex antiquâ consuetudine ad tractatum de electione habendum consueverunt, convenire concorditer diverterunt," &c. Baldwin, count of Luxemburg, brother to Henry the Seventh and Archbishop and Elector of Treves, governed that principality from A. D. 1307 to 1354.

comparative disadvantage of almost immediately following the long and brilliant administration of Rudolph von Habsburg. The family influence of Henry was not great, inasmuch as his house, though very ancient,* was not widely connected, nor largely possessed of wealth or territory; but he was a man of great personal merit,—courageous, discreet, politic, and shrewd; and he was, moreover, supported in his position by the two most powerful of the imperial electors,—his brother, Baldwin, archbishop of Treves; and Peter von Aichspalt, archbishop of Mainz, previously his own physician, but subsequently created Bishop of Basil, and then elector of that archdiocese by Clement the Fifth, in gratitude for a famous cure wrought on him by his skill, when he lay deadly sick at Avignon.† The first act of Henry was to establish the interrupted peace of the empire; his next, to settle the various claims for power which then split the respective classes of the German community into knots of partisans individually inimical to each other, and adverse in their proceedings to the general welfare of the state. In these things he proved himself a wise prince. Not so, however, in those which followed. Like all his predecessors, with the exception, perhaps, of the great Rudolph, he too was seized with the mania of meddling in Italian matters; and he desired, above all things, to perform the unsubstantial and idle pageant of a coronation in Rome. At this period, Italy was torn to pieces by the intestine feuds of the Guelfs and Ghibellines; and the inhabitants of that beautiful land, to a man, were partisans of the one party or of the other. The arrival of Henry was hailed with joy by both: each hoped to secure his aid against the other; and every device which the subtle policy of the south could put into practice was brought to bear on him for that purpose. But, like a prudent sovereign, he listened to all, and sided with neither: his great object was to bring about a reconciliation between them; and every appearance at the outset of his proceedings bade fair to transmit his name to posterity as the pacificator of Italy.

* The house of Luxemburg purports to derive its descent from the beautiful Melusine, a water-nymph of the middle ages; and it claims to be coeval with the foundation of the Frankish monarchy.

† *Vide* Lahneck, p. 66 of this volume.

This state of things, however, did not suit the views of the French court, which was then omnipotent in Naples; and Charles the Second, the son of the usurper Charles of Anjou, accordingly declared war against the empire (A. D. 1312). Henry was not slow in retorting the declaration; neither did he delay to strike the first blow. Victory declared herself in his favour; and such was the signal success of his arms, that Charles was on the point of relinquishing his kingdom to take refuge in France. But just as the object of his efforts was within reach of his grasp, the emperor died (A. D. 1313). The Italian historians attribute his death to an ordinary illness; but the German writers of the period unequivocally state, that he was poisoned; and, moreover, add that the fatal dose was administered to him in the water wherein he washed after supper, by a Dominican monk, named Bernard, of the monastery of Monte Pulciano.

Henry's death gave rise to a fierce contest for the upper-hand between two adverse candidates for the empire; and the German community was fearfully convulsed by the violent efforts of the partisans of each to advance the interests of their respective patrons. These claimants were Ludwig, duke of Bavaria, and Frederic the Fair, duke of Austria. The history of this contest is certainly not one of the least curious on record; while the contest itself is, perhaps, one of the most romantic realities that ever occurred in political warfare.

The rival princes, Frederic and Ludwig, were friends in youth; and their friendship knew no interruption when years had ripened their judgment and matured their reason. Frederic was the eldest son of Albert, emperor of Germany, who had succeeded his famous sire, Rudolph von Habsburg, by force of his own valour and great abilities. He was so handsome, that historians call him "the Fair;" and his heart was as excellent as his looks, which were then all unrivalled in the entire extent of the empire. He was ambitious, too: but then his ambition was open and honest; and he pursued it without guile, and wholly despising stratagem. His opponent Ludwig was also a high-minded man; possessed of considerable abilities, and of great personal courage; but not by much so ambitious as his opponent. Ludwig had for his personal friends and supporters

the Luxemburg party, headed by Baldwin, archbishop of Treves, Peter, archbishop of Mainz, and John, king of Bohemia, son of the deceased emperor; to these was subsequently added Aldemar, markgraf of Brandenburg. Frederic was backed by the unceasing efforts of his heroic brother, Leopold, who called into action, for the purpose of securing his election, all the power of his hereditary dominions in Austria. Thus stood matters immediately after the intelligence of the death of Henry the Seventh had reached Germany.

On the first confirmation of that event, the Archbishops of Mainz and Treves convened a diet at Frankfort-on-the-Main (A. D. 1414): and in that diet, composed principally of their partisans, the election fell upon Ludwig, who was proposed by Peter, seconded by Baldwin, and supported by John, king of Bohemia. A solemn embassy was instantly despatched to Munich, to inform him of the fact, and arrange the ceremony of his inauguration. He was astounded at this success; it surpassed all his hopes. History records the subsequent conversation as having occurred at this interview.

“My lords,” he is described to have replied to the ambassadors of the diet,—“My lords, I pray you to thank the electors in my name, and to tell them that there is nothing in the empire which seems to me heavier to wear than the crown they honour me by now offering. You tell me that I possess courage to keep it; but courage is the heritage of every true German man. To be emperor of this empire requires wisdom and power inherent in the individual. I pretend to neither. I have not possessions nor treasure sufficient to qualify me for that high station; and you know full well that without them there can be no army, and without an army there can be no defence. Why turn ye away from Frederic of Austria, who is both rich and brave—as rich in every virtue that honours man as he is in this world’s wealth? Many princes of the empire favour his pretensions to the general sovereignty; nay, I—even I—have given him my hand and word on it. Would ye then that through falsehood and treason I should climb to the throne, over a path which must be slippery with the best German blood, sure to be out-poured in this quarrel? Far be it from me! Take, then, the crown and confer it on Frederic.”

We possess, at the present time, no means of knowing whether this speech was framed for the occasion, on the *nolo episcopari* principle, or whether it was the expression of the speaker's real sentiments on the subject at issue. There is some reason to believe it the latter, if a judgment may be hazarded on full consideration of his subsequent conduct; though that it should be so, is, at the same time, freely admitted to be beyond all ordinary rules of calculation. The embassy, who either fathomed the motives of the prince, or were resolved not to be disappointed in the object of their mission, thus addressed him in answer:—

“They could not,” they said, “refrain from wonderment and reverence at the magnanimity he had displayed; but they were prepared for it, and so was also the diet of which they were only the humble servants. If he was not of sufficient power to uphold himself on the throne, by his family influence, had he not the house of Luxemburg, the party which had elected him, to his back, and also the diet who had despatched them thither? But it was idle to talk of family influence, or to attach importance to private power. Had he not before his eyes the bright examples of Rudolph von Habsburg and Henry of Luxemburg, both princes without large possessions, wide-spread connexions, or great family influence, who, notwithstanding, governed the empire with glory and great advantage for such long periods,—governed it with a strength and power that were irresistible at home and abroad? If,” they concluded, “you refuse the crown we offer, another will be elected in your stead; but he will not be Frederic of Austria. A bloody war will then be inevitable; and, perhaps, Bavaria itself will fall a prey to one or both parties. You—you alone, from your position, your valour, and your merit—you alone can stand as an effective bar between the ambition of hereditary rule and the empire,—you alone can act as an effective mediator between the house of Luxemburg and the house of Austria,—you alone can prevent the most deadly of all evils which can befall a country—civil strife. Take, then, the crown; be you our emperor.”

Ludwig listened to “the voice of the charmer:” but who is there, under similar circumstances, that would have shut his ears? Alas! not one. He forgot his refusal—he forgot his

friendship—he forgot his patriotism—and he was magnanimous no more. He returned towards Frankfort with the deputies from the diet, for the purpose of being formally inaugurated in the imperial dignity, A. D. 1314.

The first care of the newly chosen emperor was to assert his right to the title which had been bestowed on him; and it consequently became an immediate and inevitable necessity on his part to fight. Accordingly, he placed himself at the head of a considerable force furnished him by the diet and the Luxemburg party, and marched to meet the army of his opponent. Frederic was at this period encamped outside Frankfort, in the suburb of Sachsenhausen, on the other side of the Main; and Rudolph of Nassau, Ludwig's own brother, was arrayed on his side with the Austrians, against all the ties of nature and all the seeming of self-interest. Ludwig joined the troops of the ecclesiastical electors which lay between Frankfort and the Rhine, and occupied that city. A double election then took place by the partisans of both princes; and each was nominated to the imperial dignity almost at the same time.

The coronation of the emperors of Germany could be legally performed in no other place than Aix-la-Chapelle; and many persons considered no election valid or of force until that ceremony had taken place. This circumstance gave rise to a series of movements and manœuvres on the part of the rival candidates for the empire, to reach that city first; which would be quite ludicrous, had the result not been so sanguinary. Frederic blockaded Frankfort, so that Ludwig could not leave the spot, lest that important place should fall into the hands of his opponent; but, in the meanwhile, every device which the most subtle ingenuity could suggest, was put into practice by the latter to prevent his foe from stealing away without his cognisance. By the aid of the Archbishop of Treves, however, Ludwig was enabled to deceive Frederic. While the ecclesiastical forces kept those of the Austrian prince in check, Ludwig hurried off to Aix-la-Chapelle, and there received the imperial crown from the hands of the Archbishop of Mainz. Frederic, on ascertaining that he was outwitted, determined within himself that he would not also be outdone; accordingly, he hastened after his more active rival, and not being able to reach Aix-la-Chapelle in sufficient

time, he caused himself to be crowned by the Archbishop of Cologne, his partisan, in an open field close to the city of Bonn.

Ludwig was now emperor *de facto* as well as *de jure*; and the Luxemburg party had effected what they considered their master-stroke of policy. It was not for love of him, however, nor from admiration of his excellent qualities, that they had selected Ludwig as the apparent object of their solicitude; still less was it for the good of the state, or the general advantage of the empire: it was, that he might, whenever the occasion was ripe for it, be as easily deposed as he had been elected, to make way for its real object, John, king of Bohemia, the eldest son of the late emperor, and the head of the house of Luxemburg.

It now became incumbent on Ludwig to act with all the vigour he could assume; in fact, his own existence depended upon the successful issue of this quarrel. Accordingly, he marched his troops into the palatinate; dispossessed his brother Rudolph, then pfalzgraf, of all his territory; besieged Gerlach, count of Wiesbaden, in his principal stronghold; and attacked his enemies in every accessible quarter. But Frederic was not idle all this time; neither were his friends inactive in his cause. Leopold, his heroic brother, entered Suabia with a formidable army, and made himself master of that important portion of the empire; the same success attended his arms in Alsace; and he eventually sat down before Spire, on the Rhine, wherein Ludwig had his head-quarters, and prepared to lay siege to that important city. To spare the effusion of German blood, and to avert the horrors of a siege, Ludwig abandoned Spire, taking post between the city and the camp of his opponent; and in that situation he passed the winter watching the movements of the enemy. It was while he occupied this position, that an attempt was made to assassinate him by Henry of Alzei, hereditary truchsess, or judge of the palatinate, his brother Rudolph's most intimate friend and favourite. The assassin was, however, seized in the act, and, being convicted, was dragged to the scaffold at a horse's tail, and there openly executed.

Before the spring had sufficiently advanced to permit the belligerent parties to renew the campaign, Leopold was called off from his brother's quarrel to assert his own rights. The Swiss

cantons had defied his power, and insulted his officers; and, with the tyrannical perversity for which the house of Austria has been at all times so infamous, he set out at once to suppress these manifestations of freedom. The history of his success does not belong to these pages; and it will, therefore, suffice to say that he sustained a signal defeat at Morgarten.

But Frederic was not at all inactive in advancing his views the while, nor was his partisan Rudolph an idle spectator of the contest between him and his own brother. After a variety of skirmishes, and a long time spent in this war of posts, a decisive engagement eventually took place near Mühldorf, in Bavaria, in which the army of Ludwig gained a most signal victory. In this engagement Frederic fell into the hands of the conqueror; and Rudolph subsequently submitted to his brother's power, A. D. 1322.

The possession of his rival's person was not, however, found sufficient to secure peace to Ludwig; for Leopold of Austria left no means untried to restore his brother to liberty, and also to promote his pretensions to the empire. The Pope and the King of France were solicited by him to that effect, and the great dignitaries of the state were successively tempted to cast off their allegiance to their lawful sovereign. Many attacks were made on the forces of Ludwig by the Austrian duke; and in more than one were his arms victorious. But still the emperor held fast; and the efforts of his enemies were of no avail to disengage his firm grasp of the imperial power, or to give freedom to his captive rival.

However, it so happened, that what the mediation of foreign princes and the strenuous efforts of a brother could not effect, was brought about by the voluntary act of Ludwig's own free will. He remembered the time when Frederic and he were young; he felt confident of his old friend's faith; and he knew that if once he plighted his word to perform any condition, it became sacred with him. He reflected, too, upon the mutations of human life—on the hardships of imprisonment—on the painful position of his rival—and he resolved to liberate him. This extraordinary resolution he carried into effect. Proceeding to the castle of Trausnitz, in which his prisoner was confined, he was himself the bearer of the glad tidings of freedom. Frederic on this at once consented to relinquish his claims on the empire,

and solemnly undertook to trouble him no more. He also engaged to put an end to any further warlike incursions on the part of his brother Leopold, or any other of his partisans.

The most singular incident in this strange history, however, follows. Frederic, unable to keep his engagement, in consequence of the opposition manifested by Leopold to his abandonment of all claim on the imperial crown, voluntarily relinquished his liberty; and, returning without delay to the camp of Ludwig, placed himself in his hands once more—a willing prisoner. This noble action, worthy of Regulus himself, in the purest times of ancient honour and truth, was not unrewarded. Ludwig, determined not to be surpassed in magnanimity by his rival, at once waved all right to detain him; he then placed a climax upon his romantic generosity by making him his co-regent and partner in the empire (A. D. 1325). From thenceforward these excellent men were never separated until death sundered the bonds which bound them so closely to each other. Frederic died shortly after, A. D. 1330.

The latter part of the reign of Ludwig was by no means so happy, nor was his policy so successful as at its beginning. He was tempted, as his predecessors had been, to embark on the perilous sea of Italian politics; and, like them too, he was shipwrecked on the shoals of civil strife. The tempter was Matthias Visconti, ruler of the Milanese and tyrant of Lombardy, who sought to humble the pope, John the Twenty-Second, then resident at Avignon, by means of the emperor. Visconti, menaced by the pontiff for his encroachments on the papal territory, called in to his aid the ambition of Ludwig; and Ludwig, excited by a variety of motives—personal gratification—the ancient but fatal inclination of the empire to meddle in tramontane matters—and, perhaps, a desire to punish the pope, and trample under foot his arrogant pretensions—at once lent himself to the suggestions of the wily Italian. A large army was accordingly despatched into Italy to the relief of Visconti. The German empire was, however, placed under the ban of excommunication by John, in requital for this act of the emperor; but he, in return, was solemnly deposed on a charge of heresy by a council acting under the influence of Ludwig, and died of mortification soon after, A. D. 1334.

But while Ludwig was busily occupied in a fruitless contest

with the ecclesiastical power, his enemies in Germany were not idle against him. Availing themselves of his absence, the Luxemburg party, who, headed by two prelates, naturally and easily identified themselves with the pope's quarrel, set on foot a conspiracy which had for its real object the acquisition of the empire for John, king of Bohemia. The chief of this conspiracy was Henry, archbishop of Mainz, to whom the uncle of the imperial aspirant, Baldwin, archbishop of Treves, was entirely subservient. Philip the Fair, king of France, was also a covert party to it. The great mistake of the conspirators, however, was their identification with the papal quarrel, and their conjunction with a foreign power, generally hostile to Germany. The chief princes of the empire took fire at these proceedings; the free cities were soon aroused into action; and, by a simultaneous movement, as unexpected as it was then singular, the whole body of the German people declared themselves in favour of Ludwig.

Profiting by the opportunity thus offered him, the emperor at once proceeded to convene a diet; and that august body accordingly assembled at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, A. D. 1338. Robed in the imperial purple, crowned with the crown of Charlemagne, and bearing the sceptre of that mighty monarch in his hand, Ludwig appeared in full panoply before them, and spake in these terms,—the German people being his auditors:—

“Electors, princes, dignitaries, and deputies of the free cities of this German nation,—it is not unknown to you with what painful and honest zeal I have hitherto wrought and struggled to establish peace and prosperity in the church and in the empire. All my efforts in battle and in truce have had that end, and have taken that direction. I, therefore, hold it unnecessary for me to enter any further into explanation on this subject, as my motives and my actions are so well known to all the princes, dignitaries, and deputies here present, and as they are recognised to have been unfailingly addressed to the advantage of this state. You are already aware of the requisition of the pope, and acquainted with that which he desires; therefore, you may the more easily comprehend the cause of his anger against the empire, and the reason why he has placed it under ecclesiastical interdict. But though every thing insisted on by him is based upon the grossest injustice to us as a nation, yet,

being your servant, I am ready to concede it all, should it be your wish, and should the peace of the church and of the empire be thereby secured. Yea, I shall even descend from this throne to which you have called me, and in which I have maintained myself by the aid of God, and place myself in the power of the pope himself; notwithstanding that it hath been an established principle, fixed in the minds of all men, and propagated every where in public documents, from time immemorial, that the papal see possesses no authority over this empire, and is entitled to no fealty from the emperor. But if, rather than require this abasement at my hands, you should, in preference, decide to oppose the innovations of ecclesiastical ambition — to meet threat with threat, and violence with violence: or if you should prefer to leave the settlement of the question pending between us and the pope, to the deliberation of a general council of the church, then am I also ready to obey your behests, and to expend my best blood and all I may be worth in the world for the advancement of our common glory, and in furtherance of the general welfare. I am well aware that wicked men have sought to bias your minds against me, by denouncing me as an infidel, a heretic, and a contemner of things holy; but I am ready to prove here, in the presence of you, my lords, bishops, and princes, and you, my faithful subjects, the deputies of our brave free cities, that I have ever been a dutiful son of the church, that I have always stood by the faith of my fathers, and that I am a true believer and a good Catholic."

On this, the emperor voluntarily performed the test by which proof was understood of Catholicism and Christianity in these days: kneeling down on the elevated platform whereon he stood, he repeated audibly before all present the Roman confession of faith—to wit, the "Lord's Prayer," the "Hail, Mary," and the "Apostles' Creed;" and then crossing himself with every appearance of sincerity and devotion, he arose.

As he stood up the big tears rolled down his cheeks, and his frame seemed shaken with the intensity of his emotion. The assembled multitude hailing these circumstances as an evidence of truth,—rent the sky with their acclamations, and made the welkin ring with their joyous shouts. The electors and princes of the empire then adjourned their deliberations to the ancient

place of assemblage, the Königstuhl, at Rhens; and there they concluded that famous league, so celebrated in German history as the *Chur-Verein*, or Electoral Union, by which they bound themselves and their successors, from thenceforward and for ever after, to uphold the integrity of the empire against all foreign pretension, whether of king or of pope; and to spend the last drop of their blood, and the last kreutzer of their treasures, if necessary, in its maintenance. That important act, which is still in existence, runs thus in the original:—

“We, by God’s grace, Henry, archbishop of Mainz; Walram, archbishop of Cologne; Baldwin, archbishop of Treves; Rudolph and Rupert (brothers), Stephen and Rupert the younger, pfalzgrafs of the Rhine, and dukes of Bavaria; Rudolph, duke of Saxony; and Ludwig, markgraf of Brandenburg, to all whom it may concern, make known by these presents, that, the holy Roman empire being threatened with the limitation and deprivation of its honour, rights, usages, and freedom, and being in need of protection, we are unanimously of opinion, and we hereby bind ourselves in solemn union for its enforcement, that such protection shall be accorded to it; and that we shall use all our power, our strength, and our means, to prevent such encroachment on the honours, rights, usages, and freedom of the said holy Roman empire, at the hands of whoever it may be that shall so make it. Also, do we bind our vassals and retainers thereto; and call upon every man in the realm, of whatsoever condition he may be, lay or clerical, noble, citizen, or servant, to do likewise. And each elector of the empire shall aid the others, if need be, to this end, without hope of reward, or view of private advantage. And should any discordance or disunion spring up between us, as electors, the same shall be reconciled by the diet, and the decision of the majority shall be of force, and fully binding. All these things do we swear, and have sworn, in the face of heaven, to fulfil, notwithstanding any *dispensation, absolution, relaxation, abolition, in integram restitutionem* to the contrary. And should we fail in this solemn oath, or in any part of it, so may God and the world denounce us as truthless, and perjured, and dishonoured, now and for evermore. Amen.

“Given at the Königstuhl, Rhens, A.D. 1338.”

After they had subscribed to this compact, the electors

returned to Frankfort-on-the-Maine, and the diet then resumed its sittings in that free city. The first act of this body was to pass a resolution, founded on the document just quoted,—it was to this effect:—

“That as the imperial power and dignity is derived immediately from God; and as, by right and of old custom, the electors possess the power of election thereto; it is hereby resolved and determined, that whoever shall be elected emperor, either by the unanimous concurrence of the electors, or by the concurrence of the majority thereof, is *de facto*, as well as *de jure*, the rightful sovereign of this empire, having all the power of a sovereign, and possessing all the rights appertaining to the station; and that for their exercise, or for the validity of his title, he has no need of the sanction of the pope to his election, nor the consent of any other sovereign, temporal or spiritual, whatsoever.”

This resolution was despatched to Rome by the historian Albert of Strasburg; and by him was duly delivered into the hands of the pontiff. It was the first bold stroke which the papal power had received for centuries; and in so far it may be termed the precursor of the Reformation.

The further history of Ludwig's reign may be briefly related. The Luxemburg conspirators, although among the parties to the electoral union at Rhens, were, notwithstanding, still actively engaged in plots against that sovereign whom they had so solemnly sworn to support. The more effectually to bring about their design, however, they entered into a league with the house of Austria. John, king of Bohemia, being at a distance, in Italy, where the emperor had left him as regent, could not appear on the scene himself: but a candidate for the empire was soon found in the person of his eldest son, Charles. After a variety of intrigues, and many hostile movements, another meeting of the electors, held at Rhens, under the auspices of Baldwin, archbishop of Treves, or rather of those princes in the interest of the Luxemburg party, solemnly deposed Ludwig, and there elected in his stead Charles, fourth emperor of Germany of that name.

Ludwig, however, was not a man to suffer such an insult peacefully, or to endure injuries of this grave nature without an effort to be revenged. Accordingly he entered into a strict

alliance with Edward the Third of England, then one of the most powerful princes of Europe; engaging him to hold the French king, Philip the Fair, in check, while he himself dealt with his new rival.* Fortune befriended him in his first efforts; and, strange to say, she abode with him even to the last moments of his life. He defeated Charles and the Bohemian army in the Tyrol, on which country they had fallen in the hopes of wresting it from the hands of his eldest son, who possessed it in right of his marriage with Margarita Maultasch, the last of its hereditary sovereigns; and he suppressed his pretensions, subsequently, in almost every other portion of the empire. But he could not avert the visitation of death, nor turn aside the stroke of the universal destroyer. In the fulness of his fame—having attained the highest pinnacle of glory—and in the full maturity of his years, he died, after a short illness, A. D. 1346.† He was the last emperor of Germany against whom the papal excommunication was issued.

The imperial crown was offered, on his death, to various independent princes, native as well as foreign; but it was declined by all, even by the ambitious Edward, king of England. Gunther von Schwarzenberg, however, a German noble of ancient race and large possessions, accepted it; and endeavoured to make head against the Luxemburg party, led on by Charles. But he was unsuccessful in his efforts; and, being seized with a mortal illness, he expired soon after his nomination to the throne. His opponent then entered into the peaceful and undisputed possession of the empire.

The inglorious reign of Charles may be best described in the following brief summary of his life and actions, by an able and accurate modern historian.‡ “Charles the IVth has been treated with more derision by his contemporaries, and consequently by later writers, than almost any prince in history; yet, he was remarkably successful in the only objects that he seriously pursued.

* Hume (Hist. England, Edw. III., cap. 15), says, on the authority of Froissart (Book i. cap. 35), that Edward was created *vicar of the empire*: but the German historians make no mention of such a title, or such a circumstance.

† Vogt. “Rhein. Gesch. u. Sag.” says A. D. 1349. Hallam, “View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages,” says A. D. 1347.

‡ Hallam, *ibid.* vol. ii. p. 119.

Deficient in personal courage, insensible of humiliation, bending without shame to the pope, to the Italians, to the electors, so poor and so little revered as to be arrested by a butcher at Worms, for want of paying his demand, Charles the IVth affords a proof, that a certain dexterity, and cold-blooded perseverance, may occasionally supply, in a sovereign, the want of more respectable qualities. He has been reproached with neglecting the empire. But he never deigned to trouble himself about the empire, except for his private ends. He did not neglect the kingdom of Bohemia, to which he almost seemed to render Germany a province. Bohemia had long been considered as a fief of the empire, and, indeed, could pretend to an electoral vote by no other title. Charles, however, gave the States, by law, the right of choosing a king on the extinction of the royal family, which seems derogatory to the imperial prerogative. It was much more material, that, upon acquiring Brandenburg, partly by conquest, and partly by a compact of succession in 1373, he not only invested his son with it, which was conformable to usage, but annexed that electorate for ever to the kingdom of Bohemia. He constantly resided at Prague, where he founded a celebrated university, and embellished the city with buildings. This kingdom, augmented also during his reign by the acquisition of Silesia, he bequeathed to his son, Wenceslaus ; for whom, by pliancy towards the electors and the court of Rome, he had procured, against all recent example, the imperial succession."

It was in the reign of this sovereign that the famous imperial document known as the Golden Bull, from the *bull*, or seal, attached to it, was first promulgated. This celebrated instrument "terminated the disputes which had arisen between different members of the same house, as to their right of suffrage," as electors, declaring it "inherent in certain definite territories." It also fixed the number of electors at seven, and made Frankfurt the only legal place of election to the empire. The electors nominated, were, the Archbishops of Mainz, Treves, and Cologne, the King of Bohemia, the Pfalzgráf of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony, and the Markgraf of Brandenburg. Each of these princes had the rights of royalty conferred upon them ;—that is to say, they were declared equal to kings, and the punish-

ment of high treason was awarded to any attempts upon their persons or territories.

If to these be added the facts, that this reign was signalised by many melancholy catastrophes ;—by a swarm of locusts which covered the whole face of Germany, and consumed every blade of grass, and every green thing on the land ;—by a fearful famine which naturally and inevitably followed that dreadful visitation ;—by several earthquakes which extensively injured, or altogether destroyed, many of the great cities of the empire ;—by the deadly plague, known as “ the Black Death,” which almost decimated Europe ;—by a ruthless massacre of the Jews, on the old charge of poisoning the wells and producing the plague ;—by swarms of fanatics and mendicant impostors,* who, worse than locusts, and more guilty even than the most wicked Jews, at once ate up the produce of the industrious, and poisoned the minds of a whole people ;—by the use of gunpowder in warfare ;—and by the highest degree of prosperity ever before, or ever after, attained, by the Hans Towns confederacy ;—its history is sufficiently related.

Charles the IVth died at Prague, A. D. 1378, unwept and unregretted by his subjects of the German empire.

Local history says nothing further of Rhens, save and except that the Königstuhl was destroyed by the republican armies of the first French Revolution, at their earliest appearance on the shores of the Rhine. It has never since been re-edified, and its site is now entirely effaced.

OBERLAHNSTEIN.

On the opposite shore of the river to Rhens, lies the ancient town of Oberlahnstein, celebrated by Ausonius, in his poem on the Moselle, for the beauty of its site and the salubrity of its air. From this spot were dated the documents by which the Emperor Wenceslaus, the son and successor of Charles the IVth, was

* The Flagellants were the most famous of these fanatics, by reason of the severity with which they inflicted the punishment of flaying on themselves and on their disciples.

deposed from the imperial dignity and power, and Rupert, pfalzgraf of the Rhine, raised thereto in his stead. The act of deposition was subscribed in a small chapel at the further extremity of the town, to which the electors had retired to draw it up and sign it in due form, after a solemn debate on the Königstuhl, August 20, A.D. 1400.

A German poet* has not inappropriately versified this incident, making due allowance for the usual license accorded to poetry from time immemorial. The ballad illustrates the prevailing foible,—the besetting sin of that silly prince ;—and gives us no inaccurate picture of the state of high society,—the highest, indeed, in Germany,—at this period. A translation is subjoined as literal as possible, consistent with the freedom essential to the transfusion of verse from one language into another.

THE EMPEROR WENCESLAUS.

“ What boots to me kingdom and kingly power,
With all their curst annoyance ?
Much better meseems is the rich grape’s shower,
And to drink without prevoyance.”

The Emperor Wenceslaus thus spake,
While with bumper on bumper his thirst he did slake ;
As he banqueted bravely and fine
At the king’s seat † by Rhense on the Rhine.

Then outspake Sir Rupert, the palatine prince :
“ Your Asmanshauser’s good wine ;
But the Bacharach grape-juice, not far from hence—
Oh ! such drink for ever be mine !
Believe me, my lord, in this world’s wide space
You’ll not find such a liqueur your table to grace.”
This passed, as they banqueted fine,
At the king’s seat by Rhense on the Rhine.

“ Well, then,” quoth the emperor, “ hither a butt,
And we’ll judge it in plenar court.”

* F. G. Drimborn, in Simrock’s “ Rheinsagen.”

† The Königstuhl, *vide ante*, p. 71.

The wine was soon brought—on the board it was put,
And all flock'd around for the sport.
From night until morn, and from morn until night,
They sat and they quaff'd with the wildest delight—
Till they finished that full butt of wine,
At the king's seat by Rhense on the Rhine.

Then outspake the monarch : “ 'Twere truthless to say
That this noble drink hath no power :
I tell ye, who gives me enough on't for aye—
My realm is his from this hour !
I'll give him my sceptre, I'll give him my crown—
And my thanks to the boot ;” and he gulp'd deep draughts
down ;
As they sat round that huge butt of wine,
At the king's seat by Rhense on the Rhine.

“ 'Tis a bargain !” cried Rupert, the palatine prince,
“ I'll relieve you the load of empire ;
I'll reign in your stead, and each vintage from hence,
Four butts—you can scarce more require,—
Four butts of this rich wine I'll give unto thee,
The like in this world's wide space may not be.”
What this meant well might each man divine,
At the king's seat by Rhense on the Rhine.

“ 'Tis a bargain !” the emperor spake, and he smiled :
“ Here's my sceptre and crown—take them free ;
And when discord and hatred, and war's ravage wild
Assails thee, then think upon me ;
And say to thyself, ‘ Well, 'twere better the wine.’
This lesson I learnt from a monarch once mine.”
Thus ended that banquet so fine,
At the king's seat by Rhense on the Rhine.

Thus far tradition respecting the weak and wicked Wenceslaus. The facts of his ignoble history may be briefly summed up in the few following words.

On the death of his father, Charles the Fourth, A.D. 1378, he ascended the imperial throne. He was then only seventeen

years of age ; but to the inexperience of youth he also super-added a natural incapacity of mind. A stronger hand than his was required to control the misrule which then afflicted Germany from one end to the other—to heal the discords which tore the hearts of its population asunder—and to hold, with a steady hand, the balance of power in Europe. The empire was rent in pieces with intestine dissensions among the nobles, and with intrigues among the clergy : while the Christian world enjoyed the edifying sight of two popes—the vicegerents of Christ—contending for temporal sovereignty with a degree of animosity and a cruel bloodthirstiness which might have been credible among savages, but which can scarcely be credited, as perpetrated by religious men. About the same time, too, the Duke of Austria, Leopold the Second of that name, was engaged in those abortive and fatal attempts upon the liberty of the Swiss cantons, for which he suffered so much previous to the battle of Sempach, where he ultimately lost his own life. This was no state of things for a young and inexperienced monarch to contend with, even if he had had the ability and the inclination to do so. But he had neither the inclination nor the ability. Surrounding himself with a crowd of flatterers, he gave his days up to idle dissipation, and his nights to destructive debauchery. The consequence was, that in a solemn convention of the electors, held on the Königstuhl, and confirmed at Oberlahnstein, in the little chapel opposite Rhens, on the right bank of the Rhine, he was deposed by the unanimous voice of the electors, and Rupert, pfalzgraf, or prince palatine of the Rhine, elected to the imperial throne in his stead.

BREY.

On the left bank of the Rhine, a little above Rhens, stands the small village of Brey, surrounded by orchards and gardens. It is a place of little consideration, and would be of still less, but for the legends of the Nixie, which still linger there, and connect themselves indissolubly with the locality.

THE NIXIE.

But who is the Nixie ? may be asked by many of my readers. The Nixie is a water-spirit of the gentler sex, who

has her abode in the deep rivers of Germany ; and, of course, in that noblest of all German floods—the bosom of Old Father Rhine. She may be the feminine gender of the water-spirit whose tale is told in the first volume of this work ;* or she may be altogether of a different genus. But these conjectures I shall have nothing to do with, as they do not pertain to my subject. I shall simply relate all that is known of her in the neighbourhood of Brey ; the only spot, perhaps, on the river, where she is believed to be still visible.

“ I cannot tell how the truth may be—
I say the tale as ’twas said to me.”

The first tradition on record, of the fair spirit who haunts “ the depths of the waters cold,” relates to a youth of this village. He, and another young man of his own age, took boat at the dawn of a summer’s morning—it may be ages ago—to cross the Rhine to Braubach, for the purpose of having a good day’s shooting. His companion rowed, and he sat in the bow of the little barque. They had just reached the centre of the river, when he exclaimed aloud that he saw the Nixie ; and, raising his gun to his shoulder, he prepared to fire at her where she sate in the bottom of the stream.

“ I see her ! I see her !” he shouted aloud to his friend ;—
“ hither ! hither ! Look how she combs out her long yellow hair ! how lovely she looks !—I’ll shoot her !”

He fired before his companion could prevent him ; but his shot seemed to take no further effect than to cause a slight bubbling up of the water beneath the bow of the boat.

“ You did wrong, Fritz,” said his friend ; “ you did wrong to shoot at the Nixie. Those who offend the fairy never come to good : she always punishes them. Besides, she never did you an injury.”

Fritz replied not : but he fixed his eyes intently on the surface of the river, as though the fabled attraction of the basilisk existed in the glitter of the morning sun upon its tiny, foam-crested waves. Eagerly did he gaze on the liquid mirror : every moment, however, his look became wilder and wilder. He seemed to be possessed. The oarsman struck out ; he felt anxious to reach the

* Vide Zündorf. vol. i. p. 121.

shore ; for, with the superstitious feeling of the age, he believed that a retributive judgment would follow them at the hands of the outraged spirit.

" See ! see ! " suddenly exclaimed Fritz ; " see !—she rises from the deep !—she hath combed out her long yellow locks—oh, how beautiful she looks ! She rises !—she beckons me to her !—I go ! I go ! "

Before his companion could catch him, he had plunged into the river. A gurgling sound—a stifled shriek—a suppressed cry, were all he ever uttered more. On the third day his body was washed ashore. The gun with which he had fired at the spirit was clasped close to his breast ; and he looked as though he was " not dead, but sleeping."

The next legend of the Nixie gives to that spirit a multi-form character, which is only reconcilable with the ubiquity,—the infinitely divisible faculty,—of superhuman beings.

Three maidens, young and lovely, appeared all at once in the hamlet of Brey, on an evening in harvest-tide, when the inhabitants held a rural festival, and danced to the sound of music on the village green. The maidens were all of the same age—all of the same aspect—all of the same bewitching appearance : they were garbed in white from head to heel ; and they had garlands woven in their golden hair, composed of flowers such as none present had ever before beheld—so bright were they—so surpassingly beautiful, and so very, very strange. They joined in the dance ; each selected for her partner the handsomest youth in the circle ; the time sped cheerily. As the clock struck eleven they made to go. Their suitors pressed to accompany them, pleading the lateness of the night, and the loneliness of the road, as an excuse for assuming their permission.

" It may not be," spake the maiden who seemed to have authority over her twin-sisters ; " It may not be. We come whence thou knowest not ; we go whither thou mayest not follow. Be persuaded—stay ! "

" It may not be—it may not be," echoed the others in mournful cadence.

The solemnity of the denial, and the singularity of the expres-

sions in which it was conveyed, seemed to have the desired effect upon the suitors, for they one and all drew back and let the maidens depart alone. But one among them, bolder or more curious than the rest, the moment the maidens had gone, expressed his determination to follow them.

"Cost what it will," exclaimed he, "I'll see who they are, what they be, whither they go, and where they bide."

This decided the others; and all three hurried after the retreating sisters. They followed them to the edge of the river; they saw them trip laughingly over its surface for a considerable space; this they saw distinctly, for the broad bright harvest-moon that had lighted their rustic revelry, still shone with undiminished lustre. The maidens, it would seem, saw them too; for they looked back, at first frowningly, but then in smiling guise, and ultimately beckoned them onwards. The youths, intoxicated with passion, or labouring under some powerful fascination, at once followed. The water seemed to sustain them; they walked over the treacherous surface of the stream, as though it were solid ice. Soon they reached the spot where stood the maidens with open arms and laughing eyes: they stretched forth to catch them in their clasp; they rushed forward to press them in their eager embrace. Alas! alas! the phantasms of their imagination suddenly melted into thin air; and the hapless youths sunk in the depths below, never to rise again. They had fallen a sacrifice to the offended Nixies.

Three small ensanguined streaks, reaching from the centre of the stream to the shore, were all that was visible of this dreadful catastrophe on the following morning. For ages afterwards these streaks were still to be seen on every anniversary of this event: and nothing could efface them.

"They were blown by storms, and washed by rains,
But nothing could take the blood away."

Of the same sad character is the legend which follows.

The richest vine-grower in the village had one son, a youth of tender years, and of a singular beauty for his sex; indeed, he was so delicate and so handsome that no one would have taken him for a peasant's child, if they did not know that his

mother was a truly virtuous woman. In consequence of the fragility of his form, his father, who doated on him, brought him up to no hard labour ; but supplying him with books, which he obtained at Coblentz, whenever he went thither to sell his wine, he left him entirely to himself. It was an unhappy thing that this fair boy's mother had died in giving him birth ; for, having nothing to check his erratic imagination, but much to encourage it, he grew up a complete visionary, and seemed to live altogether in a world of his own. His daily haunt was by the river side ; and his waking dreams as he lay along the green sward, and looked out upon the glassy surface of the stream in summer-tide, were ever of those beautiful beings who dwelt beneath its waters. Thus lived he till the bud of youth had expanded into flower, and he had passed from a state of boyhood into one of incipient maturity.

One day, however, as he lay extended in this sort, among the sedge which grows so luxuriantly on the edge of the river, he was aware of a female of superhuman loveliness, who rose to the surface of the water directly opposite to where he lay. She was all ungarbed ; and she combed out her long yellow locks in the sunshine. The heart of the youth bounded within him ; he could not repress his feelings ; delight overmastered curiosity, and he sprang at once on his feet and stretched forth his hands to the fair creature. A momentary surprise seemed to take possession of the beauteous maiden : her lovely features assumed a severe expression ; and she frowned upon the youth as she looked towards him. Whether, however, that sensation were simulated or real cannot be known, but certain it is that it was only transitory ; for in a moment more her exquisite traits relaxed, and she smiled on him in such sort as a spirit of bliss alone may smile. She smiled on him most sweetly ; and she beckoned him to her with a confiding air, half-serious and half-playful, as though she wished to hold closer communion with him. His happiness was at its height ; he was beloved by a being of the watery world ; his desires were all attained ; he was master of that he so long had sought for. Without a moment's hesitation he plunged into the flood, and—was swallowed up in its depths. The placid waters rippled over the spot where he had sunk,—never to rise more—never.

From that day forward his aged sire knew neither hope nor happiness: he became moping and melancholy; he neglected his vineyard; and his little property went to wreck and ruin. Night and day did he haunt the spot where his hapless son had perished: patiently through the slow-revolving year, through the changing seasons, and through the weary hours of light and of darkness, did he linger by the river shore. He fancied his beautiful boy still lived; and that his abode was with the water-spirit in the bosom of the stream. Nothing could dispossess his mind of this idea; and not all the entreaties of his friends, nor all the remonstrances of his neighbours, could induce him to abandon it. Like Rachel, "he would not be comforted."

It was the anniversary of his son's loss—a splendid noon in midsummer—and the hapless sire sat on the river shore—on the spot where the youth had last sate—sorrowing, as a bereaved parent only may, for a beloved child. Three years had come and gone since that sad event had taken place: but still the afflicted father felt to the full as grieved as ever. The tears coursed each other in tiny torrents down his withered cheeks;—his head was bent upon his breast;—his eyes were hidden by his wasted hands;—his thin gray locks floated scantily over his brow;—and in the bitterness of his woe he wept aloud. Even as he wept, however, he fancied to hear the whisper of hope mingle with the sobs of sorrow. He listened,—they were the accents of his long-lost son. Again he strained his ear to catch the thrilling accents—but the voice was silent. Only the sound of some sweet instrument, like to the clear, tinkling notes of a small silver bell, struck on his ear.

"My boy! my boy!" he exclaimed; "my own, my lost one—my dear, dear child! Oh speak again, and say that you still live, and then let me die. Speak, only speak!"

The silver bell ceased; but to its tinkling succeeded a sound still sweeter to the ravished ears of the childless sire. Again he heard the gentle accents of his beloved son.

"I live, my father!" spake the voice from the "caverns of the deadly tide," in an audible tone; "I live in the depths below; but I am lost to the world above for ever. Grieve not for me; every tear-drop shed by you falls like molten lead on my heart. Grieve not then for me; but beware of thyself."

Until a victim voluntarily offers the sacrifice of his life in my stead shall I dwell in durance here; but the first that does so frees my soul from bondage, and permits it to mount to the regions of light, where sin is known not, nor sorrow. Once more only thou art at liberty to see me. Behold!"

Even as the last words were spoken, the fair form of the drowned youth rose to the surface and appeared as of yore to the eyes of the wretched sire. His face was that of a ghost — so wan, so wo-begone, so melancholy did it seem; and his figure was wasted away—macerated it might be—as though the "gnawing white-toothed waves" had long appeased their appetite upon it. It was but for a moment, however, that this pleasure was accorded to the mourning father: for in the very next instant

"The waters wild swept o'er his child,
And he was left lamenting."

"In life or in death—for weal or for wo!" exclaimed the maddened old man; "we part no more. Where you go I'll go too;—your home shall be my home;—your God my God;—I will not lose thee again."

With these words he plunged into the placid stream:—the waters rose over him; a gurgle was heard; a ripple was seen on the smooth deep;—and never more was he beheld by the denizens of this earth.

"In death they were not divided."

And now comes the

—————"Last scene of all
Which ends this sad eventful history."

Centuries after the occurrences already related had taken place, but still "ages long ago"—a youth of the adjacent town of Rhens was betrothed to a maiden of the village of Brey; and the day for their nuptials was duly fixed by the concurrence of both parties, and the consent of their respective relations. On that day, however, the youth was not forthcoming; though the damsel, garbed for the wedding, had some time stood at the altar of the little church impatiently waiting for him. She waited, however, in vain; he came not. Her rage and indignation may

be easily imagined at this derilection on the part of the bridegroom ; but both gave way to the deepest feeling of alarm, when the third day from that of her disappointment had passed over, and she had heard no tidings of him. His friends and relatives were equally alarmed ; sought him in vain at his home ; and he was not to be found anywhere. The town and village were overwhelmed with grief ; for he was, as is usual in small places of the kind, known to all, connected by relationship with many, and beloved by most of the inhabitants of both.

“I’ll go to the Abbot of Sponheim,”* spake the maiden to her mother ; “he deals with the spirits, and can tell me where Bernard may be found.”

Her aged mother offered no opposition to this project of the sorrowful girl ; for she was herself sorrowful at heart for the loss of the youth and the disappointment of her daughter ; and the maiden sped to the ancient abbey of Spannheim accordingly.

The venerable abbot was in his study when the sorrowing young creature was introduced to him. He bade her be seated ; and heard her sad story from beginning to end without relaxing for a moment his attention. He also listened graciously to her request, and promised to tell her of her lover ere she left the abbey.

“Be with me at midnight !” he said ; “it is now evening—the vesper bell hath chimed. In the meanwhile go ye to the chapel of the monastery, and pray until the hour arrives. I shall send to summon thee hither in due time.”

The maiden did as he directed ; and spent the intervenient time in prayer. As the midnight bell boomed among the Hunsrück mountains—flinging wide its echoes over hill and dale—mountain and valley—a voice as from an invisible being bade her arise and follow it to the abbot’s chamber. Thither she accordingly proceeded, led by the spirit—for spirit she felt sure it was—as “the hair of her flesh stood up—stood still” in its

* Johannes Trithemius, or John of Trittenheim, on the Moselle, afterwards abbot of Sponheim, in the archdiocese of Spiers, one of the most learned men of his age, was deemed a magician by the credulity of the vulgar, and only preserved from persecution as such by the favour of the archbishop. He was the author of several valuable works—chiefly contemporary history.

unearthly presence. The abbot was alone; he motioned her to enter; by a gesture of his hand he commanded silence, and also bade her be seated. A round table stood in the centre of the dimly lighted chamber; it was covered with a dark silken cloth, on which were depicted the forms of various unknown animals. The aged man took a bright crystal bowl from an antique cupboard, and placed it in the middle of these monstrous creations. On the surface of this bowl he then spread a white silken cloth; and he next put into it a globe which glittered like polished silver. The maiden saw all these things with wonder and fear; but her amazement and dread were increased by what succeeded. Into a small fire which burned in a bronze brazier, that stood on a tripod of curious workmanship, the abbot flung, from time to time, various mystic ingredients, muttering the while strange and, to her, utterly unintelligible incantations; and ever as the fire blazed up, or a wreath of black smoke curled over it, he would glance anxiously at the glittering globe which stood close by him on the table. At length the charm appeared to be complete; for he beckoned the maiden, and bade her look into the globe.

"What see you?" he enquired of her, in a whisper which went to her heart.

"I see," she answered, "I see my love—my own Bernard—he is walking along the shores of the Rhine. That is Brey—Look! look! he gazes on the river! he undresses!—Why, he is absolutely going to bathe: and there am I in my little room, getting ready to go to the church to be married. See! he plunges in the water!"

Sudden darkness fell on her as she said these words; it filled the chamber; she could see no more. Again, however, the aged abbot commenced his incantations, and again the apartment was lighted up by his mystic power.

"What see you now?" he asked, in the same heart-thrilling whisper as before.

"I see," replied the maiden, "I see—alas! alas!" and she sighed bitterly as she spoke; "I see Bernard, but he is now in the depths of the river, lying in a mead of Asphadel; his head pillowed on a fair spirit's lap; Oh! how beautiful she looks—how beautiful far beyond me!"

Again the chamber grew dark ; but again it was illuminated by the magic arts of the abbot.

“ What see you now ? ” he asked, in the same tone of voice.

“ Nothing,” she said, “ nothing ; all is a blank.”

“ The play is over then,” spake the abbot. “ Go in peace. Your lover has lain with the Nixie ; you may not see him alive more.”

The heart-broken girl made as to depart ; but ere she reached the door the abbot recalled her.

“ Here,” he said in a kindly tone, at the same time handing her a small packet of powders, “ here, take these, and when the morning of the next day but one from this arrives, walk forth at early dawn ; rise with the lark, and walk forth on the river shore. You will see many white spots on the surface of the stream—foam they shall seem to your eyes :—fling this on the first you can come at, and abide there the result. Go in peace, and God bless you.”

She departed ; and next morning reached home, weary, heart-sick, and sorrowful, even to the death.

At the appointed day and hour she stood on the shore of the mighty and majestic Rhine. It was early morning ; a mist lay on the ground ; the river flowed quietly past her with a gentleness and a placidity, only known to those who have been accustomed to see large bodies of water in motion at that hour ; a dim streak of red tinted the peaks of the Hunsrück range of mountains. The sun was a long distance from them ; yet he had still to toil up their steep summits, ere he became visible to the dwellers on the fertile plains which stretched around them. But high above all in the heavens, the lark held his ambitious flight, and carolled his matin-song gaily, as if there was neither care nor sorrow, misery or crime, on the earth beneath him. The foam was on the river as the abbot of Sponheim had foretold : it floated down the stream like masses of frozen snow. The maiden watched her opportunity ;—a large body passed close to the spot where she stood, driven thither by the counter current. She flung the charmed powder on it, and it stopped short in its headlong career. In a moment more it broke into small bits ; and from the centre of the fragments, thrice sprung upwards into the mid air a human corpse. Then, as though

animated with life, or guided by an invisible agency, the body rushed to the shore and struck the ground at her feet. It was the corpse of her lover.

She hastened to the village for assistance to remove the swollen and flecked remains; but when she returned they were not to be discovered; nor could any search made afterwards succeed in finding them. Some said the girl was mad—some, that she had dreamed;—while others pitied and sympathized with her. But one thing is certain, that she was never more seen in the village after that day had passed over her head. It was generally believed that she had drowned herself, to be with her lover; and credulous gossips solemnly affirmed, that both were often seen in the moonlight, wandering along the river-shore by the spot where they had perished.

Such are the reminiscences and legends of the Nixie: all of Brey.

BRAUBACH.—MARKSBURG.

On the other side of the Rhine lies the ancient town of Braubach, and on a high rock over it towers, like a giant genius, the castle of Marksburg, or Markusburg.

“Braubach,” says Vogt,* “was most probably founded in the early periods of the monarchy of the Franconian emperors of Germany, A.D. 1024–1125; and it then belonged to the Hainrichgau. It very soon, however, became a place of some importance; for it gave shelter and protection to Henry IV., when hotly pressed by his rebellious son (A.D. 1090–1100). The Counts of Arnstein then held the chief power in the town; but it subsequently passed into the hands of the Pfalzgrafs of the Rhine. One of the Counts of Eppstein, who afterwards possessed it, sold it to the Count of Katzenellenbogen; and through that family, it came to the house of Nassau. The Rhenish historian says, that it is more than probable, Braubach was at one time considerably larger than it is now; an opinion in which he is borne out by the extensive ruins which cover the soil, at some slight distance beneath the

* Rheinische Geschichte, u. Sagen. B. iii. p. 184.

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4. *Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin. ex Steud.
Common reed



surface of the adjacent land. The town was almost reduced to ashes by a fearful fire which took place in the year 1613, the origin of which is to this day a mystery.

In the castle of Markusburg or Marksburg, the only ancient castle on the Rhine still perfect, the lords of Braubach dwelt like eagles in their eyrie, looking down over flood and fell, and commanding from their inaccessible heights every human being in the vicinity of their abode. The date of the erection of this formidable structure is entirely unknown; but, from its position, and the obvious advantages presented by its site, it may be fairly presumed that it is of a very remote antiquity. It is the only castle on the Rhine, which has continued habitable without the necessity of re-edification; and to this day it is garrisoned by the princes of the house of Nassau.

It is supposed by some that the tragical occurrence about to be related, as a matter of true history, occurred in this stronghold; though, it must be admitted, that others connect the terrible transaction with the castle of Alzey, in the town of the same name, situated on the Selzbach near Krunznach, on the other side of the river.

Ludwig, or Louis the Severe, so called because of the strictness with which he administered justice in his dominions, inherited the territories of the Wittlebach family, of which he was the sole survivor in Bavaria, and in the palatinate. He succeeded his father, the famous Otto the Illustrious, in the principality of the Rhine, A. D. 1255; and his brother Henry, in the Duchy of Bavaria, A. D. 1260. His rigid administration of the laws was the theme of admiration over all Europe: though in many instances, it only served to alienate the hearts of his own subjects from him. The least infraction of his decrees was punished as severely as the greatest; inasmuch for all crimes, great and small, he had but one sentence—death. But still his very cruelty was of advantage to the country in the main; for, although he caused to be executed in a single day no less than fifty robber-knights (*raub-ritern*), who infested his dominions, there are few who know any thing of the history of Germany at that period, particularly of that part of it washed by the waters of the Rhine, will pronounce him guilty of any injustice in that act. Such was his love of justice, that he engaged freely in

the confederation of the Rhine, projected by a citizen of Mainz, and followed up by the free cities on that noble river, for the purpose of extirpating those lawless robbers who dwelt in those hitherto impregnable fortresses on its shores, although one of its objects was, virtually, to reduce the nobility from the rank which they held in the scale of society, and elevate the burghers, and those below them, to an equality with their condition; and by his example, as well as by his influence,—the fear of his power, the dread of his resentment, and the desire to imitate his actions,—he induced many other independent princes in his neighbourhood to join it likewise.

To relate the various instances of his excessive severity, would be but a revolting task; and to multiply them in a work like this, would not be very profitable to the reader. But of all the acts which acquired for him the surname he bore, the execution of his wife for alleged infidelity was certainly the most appalling.

THE PALATINE PRINCESS'S EXECUTION.

Maria, palatine princess, in right of her marriage with the pfalzgraf, Ludwig the Severe, was the daughter of the Duke of Brabant, and heiress to his territory. She was fair and gentle, mild, beautiful, and beloved. Ludwig doated on her; he loved her with a love only known to natures severe as his; and he honoured her besides for the strict performance of all her matrimonial duties. She honoured and revered him, and she feared him too; but truth must be told—she loved him not at all. That her tender heart languished for another—for some fond bosom into which she could pour the full tide of her affectionate spirit—the melancholy sequel of her history most abundantly evidences.

The great extent of Ludwig's territory, and the distance at which its extremes were situated from each other, together with the frequent necessity which existed for repelling invasion, or repressing internal discontent in one part of it or another, caused him to be long and oftentimes absent from his wife. This was, perhaps, the chief cause why she loved him so little. The severity, too, with which he forbade her all communion with

his courtiers and dependants in the court more than might inevitably exist between mistress and servant under the most rigid system of domestic management, had, it is presumed, no trifling effect upon her feelings. Indeed it contributed greatly to estrange them from him ; and as human nature, especially female human nature, is inclined to the opposite of compulsion in most cases, it may be not unfairly supposed that the Princess Maria, though exemplary to the last degree in her conduct, involuntarily acted on this natural impulse, and, like the generality of her sex, did the thing she should not. However that may be, and whatever the causes which led to it, that she did so is certain : the catastrophe which ensued to her in consequence is, happily, not often paralleled in modern European history.

It was during one of those periods of protracted absence on the part of Ludwig, that the lovely Maria, who, according to tradition, abode by command of her husband in Alzey, became acquainted with the Raugraf Henry, who, as hereditary truchsess of the palatinate and high steward of the district, attended on the court as a matter of duty. Henry was young and handsome ; he was bold and daring too : youth is ever so ; and beauty has little tendency to suppress a rash bearing either in man or woman. To see Maria was to admire her ; to live under the same roof—to breathe the same atmosphere with her—was more than the most stoical philosopher of his age might do with impunity. The result was that he did love her ;—fondly, deeply, madly loved her ; and she—alas ! for poor human nature !—shall it be told ? The hitherto virtuous wife—the paragon of perfection and purity—permitted unholy passion to possess her breast,—she returned his love. But that love—at least, so say her eulogists—was only platonic. Be it so : it is not for me to make out a case against her. Platonic, however, or sensual, it little pleased Ludwig, to whose ears it was carried by one of the thousand tale-bearers who infest the purlieus of a court, and poison the passages of all great houses. Ludwig was too proud to manifest his feelings, or too just to condemn his wife without sufficient evidence, which at that time he could not command. But he did what most prudent husbands would do in such a case—he established

a *cordon* of observation around her ; and he attached her lover to his own particular suite. Availing himself, shortly after, of an occasion for his presence in Bavaria, he directed the princess to make the strong castle of Marksburg her residence ; and he departed on his distant expedition, taking the Raugraf Henry along with him. Maria he left under the care of his sister, Elizabeth, queen of the Sicilies, with private instructions to watch her closely : her lover he specially directed to accompany himself, placing a spy upon his every action, and causing each word which dropped from his lips to be recorded against him. Thus stood matters at the commencement of that inauspicious journey.

“ Absence makes the heart grow fonder,” according to the adage ; and even so it was with the hapless princess. Despite the durance in which she lived—despite the system of espionage to which she was subjected—despite the keen, close observation of her keeper, the Queen of the Sicilies—a woman herself—a woman, too, who had lived so long in the sunny south, and who, therefore, necessarily knew so intimately all the forms, if not the substance, of intrigue—she managed to keep up a correspondence with the Raugraf. The way in which she managed it was at once most ingenious and most daring. By some means, at present unexplained, the periodical packet of letters despatched to her husband always contained one or more missives of a tender nature for her lover. This daring deceit was carried on for a considerable while ; but it was at last discovered in a way equally novel and unexpected. In her haste to avoid observation, she one day superscribed the letter addressed to her husband with her lover’s name, and that addressed to the Raugraf with the name of his lord, her husband. The fatal missive reached Ludwig’s hands in due time : he read it ; the fate of the unfortunate princess was sealed.

The equanimity of the injured husband wholly forsook him, when this proof of his beloved wife’s infidelity burst upon his soul. He slew the bearer of the billet on the spot ; and he would have performed the office of executioner with his own hands on the Raugraf Henry, if that youth had not, fortunately for himself, been absent at the time on a hunting expedition. Within an hour Ludwig was on his road to the Rhine ; and

from that moment until he reached Marksburg, he never relaxed in his speed, or tarried an unnecessary instant on his rapid journey.

He entered the ante-chamber of his wife's apartments ; and his first act was to hurl her confidant, Helike, from the open window upon the dreadful precipice below. He next slew her attendants, and all those who were about her person. This was the work of only a few moments. Their bodies he commanded to be cast from the towers of the castle into the rocky chasms at its rear, which was done accordingly. He then sought out his wife, who, quite ignorant of the awful tragedy which had been enacted so close at hand, sat buried in thoughts of her unholy love, in her most private chamber. He stood before her ; the room was filled with grim and gory men-at-arms. She rose to meet him ;—she advanced towards where he stood ;—she made to embrace him. But he waved her back with his hand ; and, at the same moment, two executioners, stripped to the waist, one bearing a bright, heavy axe, the other a coil of rope, interposed between them.

“ My husband !—God of Heaven !—What's this ? ” she stammered—her fair cheek flushing now with the most lovely red, and anon rivalling that of a corpse in deathly paleness.—“ What is this ? What may it mean ? say, my lord, say ! ”

“ Know ye this, false woman ? ” replied the pfalzgraf, holding forth to view her letter to the Raugraf. “ Know ye this ? ”

“ God have mercy upon me,” exclaimed the princess ; “ I'm lost ! ”

She said no other word : the pfalzgraf continued :—

“ Know ye this, falsest of women ? Know ye this ? ” His voice sounded in her ears like the last trump as he went on. “ Is this the faith and truth you swore to me at the altar of that God you now so vainly invoke ? While I was absent for the weal of my people, you were defiling my bed : while I was extirpating robbers in my dominions, you were encouraging a thief worse than the worst of them : and while I was protecting the public, you were encouraging a villain to plunder me of all I most valued—perhaps, also, to deprive me of my life. Your Ægistus has already regicide blood in his veins : * you would be his Clytem-

* The Raugraf was lineally descended from Otto von Wittlesbach, who assassinated the Emperor Philip of Suabia, for refusing him his daughter in

nestra; and, haply, you would help him to mount my throne over my corpse. But the justice of Heaven hath overtaken you; and now you are caught in your own net. This letter is your condemnation. In right of my sovereign power, and of the honour of my house, I therefore adjudge you to suffer death. Prepare, then, for your instant doom. And you, headsman! do your duty."

The princess bowed her head: at one stroke it rolled along the ensanguined floor. Great was the grief and deep the dismay of all present at the sight.

"Bury the body," spake the pfalzgraf. "Give her remains all the honours due to royalty."

He then left the chamber, and was never seen to smile more.

The remainder of his reign was one series of troubles consequent upon this rash act. Henry, the Raugraf, who had escaped the fate of his unfortunate mistress, went about from court to court exciting a feeling of horror and a spirit of hatred against him whom he had injured; all Germany was in commotion on account of such unheard-of severity; and the neighbouring princes of Europe hesitated not to express their abhorrence of the cruel haste with which the Pfalzgraf had proceeded in this matter. His own subjects, too, revolted at the idea of being governed by such a master; and serious discontents took rise in various parts of his territory. These were originated or fomented by the relatives of the deceased Maria, or by the friends and connexions of the Raugraf Henry, her lover; and they naturally gave Ludwig the greatest uneasiness and anxiety. To make head against them the more effectually, however, he determined on marrying again; and, will it be believed?—but who can doubt it that has read the history of Henry the Eighth of England?—he actually found a woman willing to unite herself with him. Accordingly, he espoused Matilda, daughter of Rudolph von Hapsburg, emperor of Germany; and from thenceforward, the power of that famous house prevented his foes from troubling him ever more.

It is said that he repented his precipitancy in regard to his marriage. She had been promised to him previous to Philip's accession to the imperial throne. The assassination took place at Altenburg, near Bamberg. A. D. 1208.

first wife; and, to appease his conscience, it is stated that he founded the nunnery of Fürstenfeld, or, according to others, Fürstenthal, in her honour.

He died soon after, leaving his dominions to his two sons, Ludwig and Frederic, who never knew peace with one another while they lived.

Marksburg is now used as a state-prison for the grand duchy of Nassau; but it is very seldom tenanted, and never has been crowded with political offenders.

PETERSPEY.

At a short distance up the Rhine, on the opposite shore of that river, stands the hamlet of Peterspey, one of four places whose names have a similar termination—Niederspey, Oberspey, Osterspey, and Peterspey. The derivation of this affix has long set antiquarians at fault; but it is generally believed to take rise from the circumstance of certain watch-towers (*speculæ*) having been established by the Romans on the several sites of these hamlets, when that powerful and politic people held possession of the adjacent country. One of the few incidents connected with these places, occurred, according to the authority of the following legend, in Peterspey. It is annexed to the present scant notice of that place.

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE.

Twelve disbanded soldiers at the conclusion of the thirty years' * war, found themselves wandering along the shores of the Rhine, late in the evening, close by Peterspey. They had passed through Boppard, where they could obtain no shelter for the night, because they were without means of paying for it; and they sought in the villages that charity which had been denied them in the town. But the long war had desolated the homes and hardened the hearts of all; and these weary wretches were, therefore, refused by one and by the other. They were fain, in this strait, to take refuge in a ruined barn which stood near the river.

* A.D. 1648.

The season was midwinter; it was the beginning of the new year (A.D. 1649), and the weather was intensely cold. Anxiety, and the pangs of hunger, prevented sleep; the poor fellows, therefore, endeavoured to beguile the weary hours until morning by telling stories. Many tales were told, and many strange adventures related; but one or two only, more interesting than the others, shall be given here.

“Ah!” said the first narrator, a young man who had but recently joined the army of Tilly; “ah!” said he, “if we only had the ‘Gallows Mannikin’ in our possession we need not care for any one.”

“Who is he? Who is he?” asked the others.

“Who is he? What! have you never heard of the Gallows Mannikin?”

“Never!” answered his companions.

“Well, then, I’ll tell you all about him,” replied he. “Listen.”

“It is a well-known tradition, and one implicitly believed in my native place, near Magdeburg; that when a man who is a thief by inheritance—that is to say, whose father, and grandfather, and great-grandfather before him—three generations of his family—have been thieves; or whose mother has been a thief while she carried him in her womb; or whose mother has had an irrepressible longing to steal something during her pregnancy of him;—it is the tradition, I say, that if such man, being pure of body, and free from all contact with woman in his lifetime, should be hung,—at the foot of the gallows whereon his last breath was exhaled, will spring up a plant of hideous form, known as the Alraun or ‘Gallows Mannikin.’* It is quite an unsightly object to look at; and it has broad, dark green leaves, with a single yellow flower. That plant, however, has great power;

* This is one of the wildest superstitions of the German mythus. “Where,” the tradition says, “a single exudation from the dying man falls, a particle of urine—*aut sperma in terram effundit*,—there springs the Alraun, or Gallows Mannikin.”

and whoso is its possessor never more knows what it is to want money."

"What a treasure!" exclaimed his comrades; "what a treasure!"

"But," proceeded the narrator, "it is a feat full of the greatest danger to obtain possession of it. If not taken up from the root, clean out of the soil, it is altogether valueless; and he who makes the experiment wantonly risks his life. The moment the earth is struck with the spade, the bitterest cries and shrieks burst forth from it; and while the roots are being laid bare, demons are heard to howl in horrid concert. But when the work is done—when the last hand of the daring wizard is laid on the stem to pluck forth his prize—then is it as if all the fiends of hell were let loose upon him: such shrieking, such howling, such clinking of chains, such crashing of thunder, and such flashing of forked lightning, assail him on every side. If his heart fail him but for one moment, his life is forfeit. Many a bold heart engaged in this trial has ceased to beat under the 'gallows tree;' many a brave man's body has been found mangled and torn to pieces on that accursed spot. There is, however, happily, only one day in the month—the first Friday—on which this plant appears; and on the night of that day only may it be plucked from its hiding-place. The way it is done is thus:—Whoso seeks to win it, fasts all the day; at sun-down he sets forth on his fearful adventure; by midnight he takes his stand under the gallows; he there stuffs his ears with wool, or wax, so that he may hear nothing. I forgot to say that he must be careful to take with him a coal-black hound, which has not a single fleck of white on his whole body, and which he has compelled likewise to a fast of four-and-twenty hours previously. As the dread hour arrives, he stoops down and makes three crosses over the Alraun; and then commences to dig for the roots, in a perfect circle around it. When he has laid it entirely bare, so that it only holds to the ground by the points of its roots, he calls the affrighted hound to him, and ties the top of the plant to his tail; he then shews the animal some meat, and flings it to some short distance from the spot. The hound, ravenous with hunger, springs after it, dragging the plant up by the root; but before he can reach the tempting morsel he is struck stark dead, as by some invisible

hand. The adventurer, who all the while stood by the plant to aid in its uprooting, should the strength of the animal prove insufficient, then rushes forward, and detaching it from the body of the dead dog, grasps it firmly in both hands. He then wraps it up carefully in a silken cloth, first, however, washing it well in red wine, and bears it homeward. The hound is buried in the spot whence the Alraun has been extracted. On reaching home the possessor deposits his treasure in a strong chest, with three locks, and only visits it every first Friday in the month—or, rather, after the new moon. On these occasions he again washes it with red wine, and enfolds it afresh in a clean silken cloth, of white and red colours. Then if he has any question to ask, or any request to make, he puts the one or proffers the other. If he wish to know of things in the future, the Alraun will tell him truly; but then he will only get one answer in the moon, and nothing else will be done for him by it. If he desire to obtain some substantial favour, he has it performed for him on making a request to that effect; but then the Alraun will answer no inquiries as to the future until the next day of visitation shall arrive. Whoso has this wonder of the world in his possession, can never take harm from his foes, and never sustain any losses whatsoever. If he be poor, he at once becomes rich: if his marriage be unblest by offspring, his wife immediately becomes fruitful. If a piece of gold be laid beside the Alraun at night, it is found to be doubled in the morning; and so on for any sum whatsoever: but never was it known to be increased more than two pieces for each one. His life will be long and prosperous; and his death, 'tis to be hoped, happy.

“On the demise of the owner, only a youngest son can inherit the Alraun. To inherit it effectually he must place a loaf of white bread, and a piece of money, in the coffin of his father, to be buried along with his corpse. If he fail to do so, then is the possession, like many others of great name in this world, of no value to him. Should, however, the youngest son fail before the father, then it rightfully falls to the eldest: but he must also place bread and money in the coffin of his brother, as well as in that of his father, to inherit it to any purpose.

“That's the story of the Alraun. Would that we had it.”

“Ay, would that we had,” exclaimed his companions;

"would that we had, or any of us; we would not be here this night."

"But, after all," spake another of the shivering crew, "after all, it is not near so strange as the story of the 'Familiar Spirit.'"

"Let us hear it," said the rest; "and then we'll judge between ye."

"Willingly," replied the speaker, from the corner where he sat crouching together to keep himself warm; "willingly," and his teeth chattered in his head with the cold; "willingly."

"The *Spiritus Familiaris*—or Familiar Spirit, is, as you all must know, if you have ever been in the North of Germany, or at all near Leipzig—a singular thing; it is neither altogether like a scorpion, nor altogether like a spider, but it bears some resemblance to both, more than it does to any other living animal. It is kept in a glass bottle; and whoever has it can never part with it, except at a lower price than he paid for its purchase; for, you must know, it is always bought and sold. This little devil—it is a devil—brings good luck to whosoever has him; he discovers concealed treasures to his owner; he acquires for him the love of his friends; he protects him against the hate of his enemies; steel nor lead may not hurt him in battle; with whomsoever he fights he is always the victor; and he is free from all manner and description of durance, arrest, imprisonment, and danger. He is not so troublesome as the Alraun; but he is much more formidable. For whoever is his proprietor must inevitably go to hell, unless before his death he shall have succeeded in obtaining a purchaser for him, at a lower price than he paid himself. It is of no use to throw away the phial in which he lives; it is of no use to bury or conceal it; wherever it may be hidden, in what place soever it is put, it will always return to the possession of him who held it, until he has regularly parted with it to a proper customer. When it has been paid for in the lowest possible coin, then is the hapless possessor the property of Satan. Nothing can save him.

"I'll tell you what happened to my own father's knowledge

—he having been acquainted with a person who had it from a man who knew some distant relations of the parties.”

“Do! do!” exclaimed his eager auditors; “tell us! tell us!”

“Well, then,” pursued the speaker, “you must know, that a soldier, once upon a time, purchased this demon for a crown-piece. Having, however, been soon made aware of the nature of his possession, he flung it in the first deep river he came to, and then pursued his journey. He thought within himself that he was happily rid of such a dangerous neighbour; and he prided himself on his good fortune: but he was somewhat premature in his self-congratulation; for, sure enough, when he went to bed that night there lay the phial before him on the pillow.

“It happened, however, that the very next morning he met, in the public room of the inn where he was taking a schnaaps, before he set out on his day’s march, a horse-dealer from Augsburg. A conversation soon commenced between them, which ended in the purchase of the phial, and the fiend within it. This is how it happened, or rather what brought it about. The horse-dealer, who had brought a string of eight capital horses to the fair, was in despair at three of them falling dead-lame just as he entered the city. He told his story to the soldier—indeed, he told it to the entire room. ‘I’ll help you,’ said the soldier. The horse-dealer looked incredulous. ‘Yes,’ replied the soldier; ‘I’ll help you;’ again he had only an incredulous look from his companion. ‘I will,’ he reiterated; ‘I will:’ and he shook his head mysteriously as he said the words. The horse-dealer asked him, ‘How?’ ‘Come with me to my room,’ replied the soldier. They went thither together. On the bolster lay the phial. ‘There,’ said the soldier, ‘take that thing; but give me something for it.’ ‘’Tis worth nothing to me,’ said the horse-dealer; ‘you joke with me; and I am not in a humour for joking.’ He made to leave the room as he spoke, but the soldier pressed him so hard to buy it, that he was fain to make him some offer for it at last. Thinking it utterly worthless, he said, “Well, then, to get rid of you, I’ll give you a heller* for it.’ ‘Done,’ replied the soldier; ‘it is a bargain; but it is the worst offer you ever

* A heller is the smallest German coin extant; perhaps the smallest coin in Europe.

made in your life. Here, take it.' The soldier got the heller for his phial ; and the horse-dealer pocketed his purchase. They both returned to the public-room — the one to leave the town, the other to proceed to the stables where he had his horses.

“ To his great horror, however, the hapless horse-dealer found his remaining five horses had likewise fallen dead-lame. They could not stir. His despair was greater than before ; but what could he do ? He gloomily walked forth to the fair ; and sought not his bed until a little before midnight. As he proceeded to take the key of his chamber-door from his pocket, the first thing he felt was the phial ; and forgetting the bargain he had made, he drew it forth in amaze. No sooner did he hold it up before him than the door flew open, as if by the aid of some invisible agency. He looked into the apartment. It was his own room he knew ; but still he fancied it to be one different. At a round table, in the middle of it, sat eight ancient men in quaint habits. They bade him enter ; and then inquired his will. He told them his tale. The senior then rang a small silver bell ; a boy made his appearance. ‘ Here,’ said the graybeard to the boy, ‘ take this to that gentleman’s chamber. It will pay you for your horses,’ he added, looking at the horse-dealer. ‘ Your wish is accomplished. Farewell !’ It seemed to be a bag of gold that the boy took from the hands of that aged man : but the poor horse-dealer was too bewildered at the scene—and it may be, also, with a little beer and some brantwein—to comprehend exactly the nature of its contents. At the same moment the lights were suddenly extinguished, and he fell senseless on the floor.

“ Next morning he awoke in his bed with a bad headach ; but he found on the table beside him a bag full of gold pieces ; and, more astonishing still, on visiting the stables, he found that all his horses had recovered. He was now a happy man indeed.

“ But his joy was of short duration. It so happened that he laid the phial—the source of all his wealth—on the pavement of the stable one morning that he was there looking after his cattle ; and, wonderful to relate, a wide chasm opened at his feet, and disclosed a large iron vessel full of gold and silver coins. There was only another human being in the stable at the

time, — the helper, — and he saw it too. ‘I’ll to my master,’ said the helper, ‘and tell him of this. ’Twill be a great god-send to us.’ ‘Hold!’ exclaimed the horse-dealer, whose avarice was excited at the idea of losing so much treasure. ‘Hold! Come hither and help me to raise it first.’ The helper stooped over the cavity; they both lifted from it the massive vessel with all its valuable contents. ‘Now,’ spake the horse-dealer through his clenched teeth, ‘go and tell your master.’ As he said the words, he clave the skull of the unfortunate wretch in twain, and then buried him in the chasm where the treasure had lain. From that hour forth he was happy no longer; for, was he not a robber and a murderer?

“It is true he enjoyed much prosperity for a time: for seven years he enjoyed it; but it was prosperity in appearance only. After that period had expired, all went wrong with him, publicly and in private. Misfortune fell upon him in every possible shape: all he prized most perished before his eyes; — family, friends, property, all; and he led a miserable life of it as long as he lived. That was not long, however; for he one night cut his wretched wife’s throat, as she lay asleep beside him, and then blew his own brains out on the spot with a pistol.”

“That was a terrible end, was it not?” inquired the narrator.

“Oh, terrible! terrible! terrible!” responded his companions.

“But, see! what is this?” exclaimed one. “What does it mean?” asked another. “Surely it is not yet day?” quoth a third. “It cannot be!” interposed a fourth. “Yet why so light?” queried a fifth.

As they argued thus, the large room in which they were huddled together became gradually illuminated, until a light like that of a summer noon broke upon their view. As they rose, in wonder, and prepared to depart, an aged man entered the apartment, and bade them good morning. Deeming him the owner of the place, they paid him their respects, and prayed him to take their apologies for intruding on his premises.

“Very good! very good!” said the old fellow hastily,—

“very good! very good! But whither go ye? how? and who be ye?”

They told him their history. It was soon related. They were disbanded soldiers; and they were seeking their fortune.

“Oh! I see,” pursued he; “you would fain find Fortune, but you know not where to look for her: you would wish to be wealthy, but you know not how to get riches. Is’t not true?”

“Ya! ya!” replied the twelve poor devils, good-humouredly; —“ya! ya!” They wondered at his condescension, and demeaned themselves accordingly.

“Well,” said he,—“well, my friends, perhaps I may assist you. Don’t despair yet. Are ye willing to make a venture?”

“Nothing venture, nothing have,” replied the leader of the little band. “Yes! yes!” exclaimed his companions; “any thing! any thing!”

“Come, then,” said the old fellow, “follow me,—all!”

He led the way; they followed.

“You talk of treasures,” he said, as they proceeded; “I’ll shew you how to discover concealed treasures.”

“How?” queried his followers,—“How? Not by the *Spiritus Familiaris*? Not with the Gallows Mannikin?”

“Bah! with your *Spiritus*!” he answered testily. “A fig for your Mannikin! No! With the Wheel of Fortune. Come!”

They stood on the edge of the river; the rushing waters washed their feet, and then roaring loudly sped onwards in their tumultuous course to ocean. Above, below, around, about them, all was darkness: not a star was in the sky; not a sparkle on the stream; not a single glimmer was visible in the village. Even as they stood thus, the deep bell of Buppert church tolled out the hour of midnight; to their surprise and great dismay they heard it, for they had deemed that the time was early morning.

“Come!” said the old man to their leader; “come! on!”

The wild waves of the Rhine were cleft in the middle, rising like a wall on each side; and a path seemed all at once opened for them to the bottom of the river. They hesitated;

the old man stamped his foot impatiently, and as in anger at the delay.

"But," said the spokesman of the party, addressing him; "but you have not told us how it is you propose to serve us, nor what price we shall have to pay for the assistance you offer."

"The mode," replied the ancient, "you shall see. My price is his soul who shall fall to me by fair lot. Are ye satisfied?"

A moment these hapless men hesitated; but no longer. The pangs of present poverty appeared greater to suffer than all the fear of hell in prospect. They decided to accept these conditions.

"Agreed!" said the spokesman. "Go on! We follow!"

They plunged into the stream, and soon gained the bed of the boiling current. The waters closed over their heads, as they descended, and they could hear the elemental strife far above them, growing fainter and fainter as they dived into the caves where old Father Rhine for ever reposes.

"We can only die once," was their argument, as they sunk into the aqueous depths. "What matters it when? and why care for hereafter?"

In the centre of a large, open space, or, rather, in the centre of a considerable plain in the bed of the river, stood an immense wheel, parallel with the surface of the earth and the surface of the stream above them. The roof which covered them was a crystal vault like congealed water, or, more correctly speaking, like those beautiful, transparent arches, which are to be found beneath the Rösenlauri glacier on the Scheideck mountain, in Switzerland. But though it was night above on the earth, there reigned a light in these subaqueous regions much more brilliant than that of a bright summer's day on the sunny shores of the bay of Naples. The old man stopped at this spot.

"Here," he said, addressing his followers; "here is the Wheel of Fortune"——

They all looked at it attentively.

"Take a seat each of you on it," he pursued; "sit just three fathoms distant from one another, on its circumference"——

They did so.

"Now the wheel will revolve," went on the ancient, "and you will see in what portion of the land those treasures you look for lie buried. But beware of one thing," he added sternly "——

They gazed in his face as he spoke, and they were horrified with the fiendish expression of his countenance.

"Beware of one thing," he went on. "Let not either of you look at the other while the wheel revolves, or —— I'll twist the neck of the offender that moment."

Shudderingly, each averted his gaze from his neighbour; the wheel began to move.

"One of your number is mine, remember," quoth the old man.

They heard no more; for, with a noise like that of ten thousand mill-stones, the huge wheel whereon they sat whirled rapidly round, and round, and round, until they lost all external perception.

Not so, however, with their internal consciousness; they fancied to become aware of all that was passing on the earth; of all that was hidden in the bowels of the earth; and of every thing that is concealed from the ordinary glance of human nature. As in an immense mirror over which the machine seemed to revolve, they saw every thing they desired to see; and a great deal more than they could have wished to witness. For they saw those long dead and buried; those they knew, and those they knew not. They saw their proud general, Wallenstein, and they saw his astute and unprincipled opponent Moritz of Saxony, both of whom had long before died; they saw these and thousands of others; all moving in an atmosphere of liquid flame, and glowing like molten metal in a fiery furnace. This they saw, and much more; but at length consciousness of every kind fled from them; and they sunk down exhausted and without sensation.

On their recovery, they found themselves in the building from whence they had gone forth in the night; the dim gray of a winter morning, struggling through the windowless apertures, shewed them to one another in that peculiar haggardness and ghastliness of aspect produced by such a light; they were greatly disheartened, and looked wildly around them, as if they had

just awoke from a troubled sleep. By degrees, however, they ventured on the topic of their vision, as they chose to term it; and, gaining courage as the conversation proceeded, they began to make merry with it, as with an extraordinary dream. And thus they whiled away the time until it was broad day.

"Now," spake the chief among them, "let us muster, and be off. We must look after our breakfast."

They arose; but as they moved, their clothes fell to pieces, like the tinder of burned rags.

"God save us!" quoth the leader. "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, and myself eleven. We miss one. Where is he?"

"Here!" exclaimed a hollow voice; "here!"

They looked on the earth whence the voice seemed to come, and there they beheld a sight which froze their blood with horror. At the bottom of a deep chasm, rolled up into a shapeless mass, lay the body of their missing companion; beside him stood the little, old man, of the preceding night; around and about them danced demon forms of the most frightful shapes imaginable, in a lurid, sulphureous atmosphere, which glowed like iron in a red-heat.

"Here!" exclaimed the same hollow voice, that of the old man; "here! here!"

One and all they rushed from the building, and never looked back until they were fairly out of sight of Peterspey. What became of them afterwards is not known; nor is it of any moment to this narrative.

This is the only legend of the hamlet of Peterspey worth relating.

DÜNKHOLDER FOUNTAIN.

The Dünkholder Brunnen, or Fountains, have been known for more than three hundred years as famous mineral springs; for how much longer is not stated in any history or tradition now extant. It is, however, to a period full a century antecedent to this time, that the subsequent legend relates; and it is but fair to

premise that the story has been laid claim to as the property of other places. The fountain is situated at the entrance of a deep valley, which runs a considerable way inwards, almost at right angles with the Rhine.

THE NAIAD'S NUPTIALS.

The lord of a castle which, once upon a time, stood at the bottom of this valley, married the Nymph of this Fountain, as the legend tells us. It is ages long ago: his name has passed away with the centuries which have since revolved over the world; his castle has crumbled to ruins, leaving scarce a trace of its strength; and no record of him or his exists, save that which succeeds in these pages.

The morning was a bright one on which this gay young knight set forth to cross the Rhine, for the purpose of pursuing the chase on the opposite side of the river. He was alone; and as he galloped adown the narrow valley, his territorial possession, he carolled blithely, for he was light of heart. As he reached the river, however, he was aware of a form in white sitting beside a fresh, bubbling fountain, and bending over it, as though to peer into its translucent depths.

"Ho! ho!" quoth he,—“ho! ho! What have we here? I know no fountain in this spot, though I have traversed it daily since I was a child; and who this maiden may be, by my halidom, I wist not.”

Approaching the sparkling spring, he reined in his mettled steed, and sprang to the ground. In another moment, he stood beside the maiden. She was fair to see as the spring rose;—beautiful as the bright morning. Rising slowly as the young knight neared her, she bent gracefully as in recognition of his presence: but she replied not to his greeting, nor did she speak at all save in answer to his direct questions. Stricken with her superhuman loveliness of face and form, and impelled by a power resistless but unseen, he spake to her of love, and ended by avowing his passion.

“Fair ladye,” he said, “I love you. Whither come you, and who may you be? Never before did I deem such a treasure lay near me.”

"Sir Knight," she replied, after a short pause, — "Sir Knight, I live near"——

Accents like hers the young knight had never before heard from human lips; and he knew nothing of the accents of heaven:—for

"Her voice was like the warble of a bird,
So soft, so sweet, so delicately clear,
That finer, simpler music ne'er was heard:
The sort of sound you echo with a tear,
Without knowing why—an overwhelming tone
Whence Melody descends as from a throne."

He was quite beside himself with transport. His sensations were overwhelming: they were the more so as they were altogether new to him.

"I live near," she continued,— "very near this spot; and though I am a stranger to your eyes, full many a time and oft have you been seen by me."

She sighed as she spoke; and the blush which mantled over her delicate cheek, as her glance met his, gave proof to the young knight that the meetings she spoke of were not mere accidental recognitions. He encouraged her to proceed by look and by word.

"Many and many a time," she went on, — "many and many a time have we met together near this spot; but you saw me not; you might not then see me, for you were ever accompanied by your huntsmen, or jagers, or some of your retinue. I saw you, and longed to converse with you, that I might tell you how I loved you — how fondly, deeply, devotedly I loved you."

The young knight was in a moment on his knees at her feet; he clasped her to his heart; he covered her blushing brow with kisses. But he went no further; for, with a maiden dignity which stilled the wild tumult of his passion, she rose and majestically waved him off.

"We meet to-morrow," she said, proudly but sadly, "on this spot, at this hour. Think of the subject till then."

How she got away the distracted lover could not tell: but gone she was, as she said the words; and he could discover no trace by which to follow her. He hunted not that day; but

returned to his castle, and shut himself up in his private chamber.

The weary night sped slowly over, to his thinking, and the longed-for morrow arrived at a slower pace still, to his excited imagination. Before the appointed time he was on the spot; all ardour for the expected interview. "The ladye of his love" appeared, as the first streak of dawn was visible on the verge of the horizon; but how she came, or whence, he could not discover, more than how she left, or whither she went to, on the preceding day. The greeting she gave him was gracious; and again she spake of her love for him. Again, also, did his passion overcome his discretion; he caught her in his embrace; he clasped her wildly to his bosom; he kissed her neck, vermilioned with the hue of maiden modesty; he ——

"We meet to-morrow," said she once more, with a prouder but likewise a sadder expression of countenance than before.—
"It shall be the last time of our meeting in this world, if you learn not to deport yourself towards me as becomes a man to a modest maiden."

She stood free before him for a moment only; in a moment more she had disappeared in an equally mysterious manner as on the preceding day. How she had extricated herself from his embrace; how the frail form, the slight figure, the delicate girl she seemed to him, should have overborne his strength—he a strong man in the vigour of youth, the power of lustihood, and the force of passion;—should have set his efforts to detain her at nought, he could not divine. She had slipped away from him like an impalpable substance, and left no more sign of her presence than if she were a shadow. He had a heavy heart all that day; and he never left his chamber until an hour before the dawning on the day following.

At that hour he again stood on the spot appointed; and again when the first ray of light developed itself in the eastern sky, the fair dame stood beside the fountain.

"It may not be," he spake solemnly to her,—
"it may not be, that I can live and not love thee—that I can live without thee. Thou art the morning star of my soul; wilt thou be the evening star of my home?"

The maiden was silent; but her changing colour spoke her answer more eloquently than words.

"Will you be mine, my own, my loved one?" He now pressed his suit with the holy ardour of pure love; and the maiden listened to him approvingly.

"I am not of your human race," she replied hesitatingly; "I am not one of the daughters of men. I am an immortal."

The young knight, though he had entertained suspicions of the supernatural character of his ladye-love, was deeply moved with this admission, and he readily expressed his surprise.

"My sire is the spirit of yonder great river. You call him Father Rhine," she proceeded. "I am a Naiad; my home is the fresh spring—the pure waters of the liquid fountain. My name is *Ægle*.* Erewhile I abode in Italy—beautiful Italy. Now have I taken up my dwelling beside my mighty sire's domain. I have loved you long and well; you are my first, my only love. But we give not our hand to mortal man, without also giving our heart; and we give not our heart, save on one condition."

"Name it! name it!" exclaimed the enamoured youth; "name it! If my life be the penalty, 'tis forfeit."

"Yea," she said, smiling sweetly on him; "your life *will be* the forfeit, and it will be the death of mine—for 'twill be my condemnation to endless sorrow. Listen!"

They sat on the green sward; the bubbling spring gushed out at their feet, sparkling in the bright sunshine of the clear morning; the birds in the trees sang gaily over their heads; the chirp of the grasshopper was heard afar off; and the shrill cry of the mariner on the Rhine was merely audible, softened by the distance into sweet melody. It was just a time, and clime, and spot for two young, fond hearts to interchange vows of eternal

* *Ægle*, according to Virgil, was the fairest of the Naiads, who, if Hesiod can be credited, amounted to upwards of three thousand of all descriptions:—

"Addit se sociam, timidisque supervenit *Ægle* :

Ægle Naïdum pulcherrima : jamque videnti

Sanguineis frontem moris et tempora pingit."—*Bucol. Ec. vi.*

love. Alas ! that such youthful vows should be ever spoken ; but alack ! and alas ! that they should ever be broken.

“ Listen,” she said, laying her hand on his, and looking into his eyes, as though she would read his soul through them,—
“ Listen to me.”

He pressed her little hand to his heart, and then kissing it, assumed an attitude of intense attention.

“ We bear no rivals near the throne which we erect in a human heart,” she proceeded. “ We contend not with the daughters of man. Whoso loves us, must love us alone. He whose love is returned, must be true as your sword, Sir Knight, and pure as the waters of this clear fountain. See, how it dances in the morning beam ! ’Twas formed for you. ’Tis yours.”

Again the young knight kissed her hand, and again pressing it to his heart, awaited her further communication.

“ It is against the laws of my kind,” she pursued, “ to intermarry with a mortal ; but they have been more than once infringed on, more than once defied. Never, however,” she added in a deeper tone ; “ never without punishment. Never ! never ! ”

The young knight gazed upon her ; their eyes met ; and her brow became brighter ; her spirits rose as she gazed on him and he on her. She proceeded :—

“ If he whom we select prove untrue in thought or in deed—if he love another, or even think of her but for one moment, then is his fate sealed—he dies ! And we—alas ! alas !—we live for ever ; and for ever suffer. Wilt swear such truth ? ”

“ I swear ! ” was the ready reply of the youth ; “ I swear ! ”

“ We meet this night in your chamber,” she said. “ Until then, I may see you no more to-day. Farewell ! ”

She gave him an antique gold ring as she bade him adieu ; and then she melted from his sight in the waters of the fountain.

Night came ;—the bridal bed was made ready ;—the young knight anxiously awaited the arrival of his *Ægle*. She came. How she came he knew not : but there she was beside him. Sweet music followed her footsteps, leaving only her at the door of the nuptial apartment ; and the odours of every thing that is delightful to the sense accompanied her into his presence. She made a paradise around her—

"The very air seemed brighter from her eyes,
They were so full, so beautiful, so rife—
With all we can imagine of the skies."

"Once more bethink you, Sir Knight," she spake solemnly;
"bethink you once more. It is not even now too late. You
know the heavy penalty."

"I swear!" were the only words of her lover; "I swear!"
They were locked in each other's warm embrace in a
moment.

"Their priest was Solitude, and they were wed—
And they were happy."

Seven years did their love last, pure and unimpaired as at
the beginning; nay, it seemed only all the purer for the lapse
of time, even as generous wine grows better as it grows older.
In that time their union was blest with seven beautiful
children. About this period, however, a war broke out on the
frontiers of the empire; and it behoved the husband of Ægle,
now no longer entitled to the appellation by which he has here-
tofore been known—the young knight—to join the army of the
emperor. The individual who then exercised sovereignty over
Germany was Henry the Second, better recognized, perhaps, as
Henry the Holy; and the campaign undertaken on this occasion
was one of those expeditions made by that monarch for the con-
quest of Lorraine.*

The night before the warrior left the castle, Ægle and he con-
versed together on the subject of her fears, and his former oath.

"You will remember," she said—"you will remember. If
the slightest taint of untruth rest on you, we meet no more!—
and your death is inevitable!"

"I cannot forget," he replied, fondly—"for are you not my
life?"

They parted the next morning as lovers have ever done, and,
it is to be presumed, ever will do—in sadness and in sorrow.
The knight crossed the Rhine, and hastened to the emperor's
camp at Ingelheim: the ladye shut herself up in his castle, and

wept her loss, until the shades of evening fell on the earth; she then devoted herself to the care of her lovely children.

Our knight soon won for himself the notice of the emperor by his bravery and conduct in the campaigns which ensued, as well as by his successful interposition between that prince and the enemy at a moment when the life of the former was in imminent peril. Before the last campaign had concluded he was the chief favourite at court.

"I must reward him," spake the emperor to his empress, the gentle and pious Kunigunda; "I must reward yonder brave knight, or my generosity will be called in question."

"It seems to me," replied the empress, "that he would be well rewarded with your niece Agnes. What say you to the match?"

"Excellent!" exclaimed the emperor; "let it be so."

The husband of Ægle was soon made aware of the honour and reward intended for him by his benefactors. He declined them, however, to their great amaze, and to the consternation of all his friends.

"How is this?" asked the emperor, and his brow blackened like the sky on a stormy night; "how is this?"

"You had better say why it is that you refuse," interposed the empress; "surely we are entitled to know your reasons."

"We command you to state them!" said the emperor sternly. "Proceed!"

The hapless knight was now obliged to tell all: and he told every thing he could remember.

"What say you, my lord bishop?" said the emperor, turning to the newly created Bishop of Bamberg, who stood beside his throne; "what says the church to this alliance?"

"It is unholy," answered that prelate; "unholy, forbidden, accursed of God and man!—it is accursed to wed with demons! and the malediction of Heaven will inevitably fall on such union!"

"By the body of St. Lawrence!" said the emperor—that was his favourite oath—"but you shall marry my niece, if it

be only to save you, my preserver, from perdition. So make ye all ready for the bridal !”

The blushing bride—a beautiful girl of seventeen—was then introduced to her knight; and what with the duty he owed the emperor, what with the worry he sustained from the whole court, and, “last not least,” what with the extraordinary merits of the young lady herself, he at length yielded. It was accordingly agreed that the wedding should take place in a week; and the most sumptuous preparations were made for the occasion. In the meanwhile, the wretched troth-breaker—was he happy? We shall see.

• The nuptial banquet was announced—the marriage had been just celebrated—and the guests took their respective places at the gorgeous board. At the head of the table sat the emperor; beside him sate the bride and bridegroom. The hall was lighted up to look like day: a thousand servitors stood around. Mirth and wassail were the order of the night. Time sped on—smiling? It is to be presumed so. All were happy, or seemed to be so: the careful forgot their cares; the designing laid aside their plotting; and the ambitious, in that joyous hour, had no higher object than that inculcated in the Assyrian king’s celebrated maxim.* Even the faitour knight himself thought no longer of his hapless Ægle; while the generous wine, the hearty laugh, the harmless joke, the melting music of the minstrel choir, circulated around, and filled the hearts of all with gladness. The hour waxed late; it drew near to midnight: when uprose the emperor, a brimming beaker of Burgundy held high in his right hand. There was an instant silence.

“Here ’s to the newly-married couple,” he said; “good night, and joy be with ye all !”

The roof reverberated with the cheering which followed this sentiment, three times told and thrice repeated. The bride hid her face in her hands to conceal her burning blushes; the knight arose to thank the emperor, and to express his gratitude to his friends.

* “Eat, drink, and love: the rest ’s not worth a fillip.”

"My gracious liege," he began—"my most excellent friends——"

What does he see? Why stops he short? Wherefore gazes he so wildly on the vaulted ceiling? All eyes are on him—he cannot speak—he gasps for breath—he falls in a strong convulsion. What may be the cause of this commotion?

Through the fret-work of the ceiling a beautiful little foot, naked as innocence itself, was visible. It protruded forth full in the face of the traitor: every one at the banquet—emperor, bride, and all, saw it. *Ægle's* it was; well the wretched man knew it: and well also he knew that his fate was sealed.

"The devil is busy here," quoth the emperor; "but we'll defeat him. Yes, we'll defeat him, as we now defy him!"

"Place running water between you and yon bad spirit," said the Bishop of Bamberg, who had performed the marriage ceremony, "spirits may not pass that natural boundary."

"To-morrow, then," outspake the emperor, "we cross the Rhine. Be ready all for the transit."

The knight was borne to his chamber; his young bride attended assiduously on him until his recovery, which was not before the morning dawn began to make gray the distant mountains. It was a sorry nuptial night for her, poor thing! for him it was not a whit better. All through it he was delirious; and ever, in his delirium, he raved wildly about his beautiful *Ægle*.

It was mid-day before the court was in motion to cross the Rhine. An advanced party had passed over, and prepared for the emperor's coming; their preparations completed, they sat on the margin of the Rhine, or sauntered slowly along its shores, to be ready to receive their sovereign. In due course the emperor crossed also; and the empress and the beautiful bride followed. The barque in which succeeded the faithless knight came after those which bore the ladies of the court. It was a splendid sight to see these gay barques, and their glancing argosy; colours streaming, music playing, crowds on both shores shouting, as they glided like glorious shadows over the glassy flood, beneath a most magnificent summer-sun. The emperor and his suite struck the land just as the latter left the opposite bank

of the river ; so that he stood on the shore ready to receive the bridegroom as he landed. But he, alas ! was never to land. Even as his barque reached the centre of the stream, a sudden darkness fell upon the bright scene—making the gloom more hideous by its strong contrast ;—the river roared, and foamed, and swelled ;—the flood-gates of the heavens seemed opened ;—high on each side of the fated vessel rose the white-crested billows, like an army of gaunt, hungry lions shaking their dishevelled manes, and bellowing with the fell rage of famine. The waves washed over it wildly ; the cowering crew gave themselves up for lost. In an instant, however, the storm had passed over, and the bright sun once more danced on the aqueous mirror beneath, which flowed by as calmly as if it never had been ruffled by a breath or heaved by a single billow. But the bridegroom—where was he ? Gone !

“ I saw him,” said the helmsman, an aged mariner, “ I saw him seized by a wave : clasped, as it were, in its embrace, and borne over the gunwale into the depths below. Once only he tried to rise to the surface of the water ; one fearful effort he made to take breath for the fierce war he waged with the river-spirit ; but even as he rose, a tiny white foot,—I could see no more than the foot and ankle, and they were naked, as if just born—that little foot planted itself on his forehead, and sunk him down to the bottom.”

“ And I,” spake the boatman who sat in the bow of the barque, “ and I heard him utter one faint cry—I think he called ‘ Ægle ! Ægle ! ’ ”

“ Be it so,” said the emperor solemnly, when he heard all the circumstances of this sad tale.

“ ’Twas Providence that ordered it thus,” observed the Bishop of Bamberg.

The court obsequiously echoed the sentiment ; and the fate of the knight was soon forgotten by all except his young bride, who, shortly after, took the veil.

Since then, it is said, the Dünkholder Brunnen has become bitter to the taste ; and from that period to this it has flowed no more “ a fountain of sweet waters.” But the Naiad who loved

BOFPART CHURCH.

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it lingers there still, and dispenses her benevolent bounties to those afflicted with all diseases—except a broken heart. These assuredly die : for nothing can cure them.

The castle of the faitour knight, if ever it had being, now exists no longer.

BOPPART.

Boppart is unquestionably one of the oldest towns on the Rhine. It was originally a post station of the Romans—one of the fifty castles built by Drusus Germanicus, being situated there ; and shortly after it became the head-quarters of the *militum balistarorium*, or “ordnance” of that people, on this river. The chief in command of the Roman artillery dwelt in the town, and held there a kind of minor military court, to which all the neighbouring native princes in alliance with the conquerors occasionally resorted. It was then known as *Baudobrica*, *Bodobriga*, or *Bontobriga*. On the decline of the Roman empire, the military station at Boppart disappeared ; and the name of the town was not heard of for centuries. The next mention made of it is in the era of the Frank kings of Austrasia. That it was the abode of some one or other of these sovereigns is certain : for tradition has handed down the fact of its being a royal residence ; and authentic local history speaks of the remains of a royal palace of the well-known architecture of their period having had very recent existence within its walls.* This edifice was entirely demolished by the French army, A. D. 1764.

In the reign of Conrad the Third, emperor of Germany, Boppart became an imperial city (A.D. 1137–52) ; and about the same period (A.D. 1146), St. Bernard of Clairvaux preached the second crusade to its inhabitants, on one of whom he is stated to have performed a miraculous cure. Boppart must at this time have been a place of considerable size, for the biographer of the saint, in reference to this cure, terms the town

* Freyherus’ “Orig. Palat.” cap. ii.

“vicum magnum.” For three centuries subsequently, however, no allusion to it occurs in local or general history.

About the middle of the fifteenth century (A.D. 1417–89), Boppard became the centre of the Rhenish Toll district, and the chief town of the confederacy formed by the princes on that part of the Rhine to protect traffic and commerce on the river. At this time a wild custom existed in these quarters. Whenever a barque sunk in the Rhine, or was wrecked on its shores, the dwellers in the vicinity claimed all they could save from the unfortunate vessel as their own. It was the same, also, if a wagon laden with corn fell to pieces on the high road; they held that they, and not the owners, had a right to the lading. One of the first objects of the Confederation was to put an end to this assumed claim; and to place the property of merchants and farmers in that respect on a right footing. This claim was termed *Gruntrure*; and it required all the power of these potentates to destroy it. Boppard being the centre of the union, and the chief commercial city of the confederacy, was greatly interested in the abolition of this injustice, and exerted itself strenuously to that effect. English wool and Geneva wares formed the principal staple of traffic on the Rhine at this period: and it was absolutely necessary to insure protection to the traders in these valuable wares, otherwise they would not adopt that route again for the transit of their merchandise.

An imperial diet was held in Boppard by the Emperor Rudolph von Hapsburg A. D. 1288, soon after his defeat of the pretender Tile-Kolup, at Colmar, in Alsace; who assumed the name, and professed to be, the Emperor Frederick the Second, dead full a quarter of a century antecedent to that period. It is said that the following amusing episode in the life of that great prince, occurred in this town; though there are, unquestionably, many causes which concur to make Mainz the scene of its enactment.

Rudolph, like most men of his stamp, was altogether unacquainted with sloth, and cared very little for those indulgences which were ever within the command of his high station. In summer and winter he awoke with the dawn of the morning; and, generally, if the weather was fair, went forth from his tent or his palace, as the case might be, alone, mostly in disguise.

It was while engaged in one of these solitary rambles, during his brief abode at Boppard, that he strolled into a baker's shop; and, the morning being bitter cold, begged leave to stand by the oven for the purpose of warming himself.

"Indeed, then, you sha'n't," replied the owner of the shop, a widow woman whose husband had been some time dead. "Indeed, then, you sha'n't, my man. You are a soldier, and should stay away from us poor people. But no, you are not satisfied with eating us out of house and home, you must also come and thrust us from our own firesides. Off with you—scamp as you are! Or I'll——"

"Nay, my good dame, nay," quoth the emperor: "'tis deadly cold! Surely you would not turn an old soldier from your fireside such a morning as this is."

"Yes, but I would, though," replied the tart dame; "yes, but I will though! So be off with you."

"I have not a kreutzer," continued he, greatly amused by her pertinacity; "I have spent my all in the service of the emperor. Rudolph von Hapsburg owes much to me—very much."

"Well, then, let him pay you," retorted the termagant; "you don't want me to pay you, I hope."

"He has turned me off without a gulden," continued the emperor.

"Serve you right," she said; "you deserve no better,—idle, lazy, loon that you are! Off—out of my house this moment!"

"Surely," interposed Rudolph, imploringly, "you will let me warm myself—an old soldier—a creditor of the emperor's—a——"

"Not if you were the emperor himself!" she answered angrily.

"How now, widow," said Rudolph, desirous to tantalize her, "that 's treason."

"Treason here, or treason there," she replied pettishly; "treason here, or treason there, 'tis the truth."

"But why?" inquired he; anxious now to know the cause of her animosity to him: one of his chief objects in going about in disguise being to ascertain, personally, the grievances of his

people, with a view to their redress. "Why, my good dame? why?"

"Why?" she answered, "why? I'll tell you. Because he has made us, his poor people, bear the burden of his armies. That, however, I would not care for so much, if we were but paid for what his soldiers consume. But, no; they come into our houses and our shops, and take what they list without offering us any thing for it, except abuse. So as you are a soldier of his no longer—and as I have the power to punish you—I'll do it. Off with you, skulking blackguard as you are,—off! off!—out of my house, and take that with ye!"

So saying, she flung a vessel of cold water on him; and he was fain to make as speedy a retreat as possible.

"This must be thought of," said he to himself; "this must be looked to, or my good name will suffer among my subjects."

With these words he entered the palace by a private door, and proceeded to his chamber.

On that day he gave a grand banquet to the chief officers of state, and the principal generals of his troops; and he secretly despatched a messenger to bring the baker's widow into his presence. She was introduced accordingly; and the emperor required her to state the grievances of which she had complained, before that august company. She did so without hesitation or disguise; and many a high head at the table of their sovereign was bowed down in shame to hear of the misdoings which they had permitted and encouraged. At the conclusion of her story the emperor rose and left the room. He was scarcely ten minutes absent when he again reappeared in the garb which he had worn in the morning. The widow was surprised to see him whom she had driven forth so ignominiously from her shop in such goodly society: but she thought that he had been, perhaps, brought thither like herself, and for the same purpose.

"Lazy loon!" she muttered between her teeth as he approached her; "how! you here too? What may the emperor want with such as ye, save to punish you still more?"

Rudolph, however, heeded not her objurgation except to laugh heartily at it. But this only increased her surprise the more.

"Is the man mad?" she asked; "is he crazed—is he mad?"

that he laughs in this worshipful presence as though he was in a pot-house!—Hold your peace, fool!" she suddenly exclaimed; "the emperor will be here in a moment."

"He is here," said Rudolph, bowing to the ground—"at your service."

She was struck dumb with astonishment.

"You! you! you!" she repeated rapidly, while her faculties were forming a conclusion; "you!—forgive me, my lord! forgive!"——

She knelt to him as she said the words; but he raised her, and bid her be of no fear.

"And now, my lords," he added to the courtiers, who had crowded round to witness this singular scene; "we must amend these matters. Truth lies in a well. We have it now; though I went deep enough to find it; and got a wet jerkin into the bargain. These things must be no more."

The widow grew pale as the emperor alluded to the ducking he had got at her hands; but his good-humoured look soon reassured her.

"My lord steward," he then said, addressing that officer, "you'll take care that our informant is duly rewarded. We shall not have even her complaints without paying for them. Let her have the best boar's head on our table; and see that she lack not plenty of our oldest Rhenish wine to wash it down. Frau Bakerinn—farewell."

And so ended the scene, if this tradition be the truth.

Boppart became subject to the Archbishop of Treves, Baldwin, of Luxemburg, already alluded to, A.D. 1312. The occasion of this subjection was the weakness of the Emperor Henry the Seventh, brother to that prelate, who, postponing the interest of the state to his private feeling, transferred this city from the dominion of the empire at large to that of the see of Treves. Inspired by the spirit of freedom, the citizens rose in assertion of their own rights. "They were no party to the transfer of their allegiance," they said; "and they desired not to change rulers." But Baldwin, one of the most energetic men of the age, soon overpowered them; and during his lifetime, that is, for a period of full forty-two years afterwards, they gave him no further trouble. Kuno von Falkenstein, who succeeded that prelate,

the next but one, finished their subjugation to the electorate and archbishoprick over which he ruled, and completely crushed all attempts at securing independence while he lived.

In the electorate of John of Baden, archbishop of Treves (A.D. 1456–1503), another outbreak of the inhabitants of this city, against the archiepiscopal government, took place. It originated in some dispute between the toll-taker appointed by that sovereign, or the soldiery by whom he was supported, and the citizens; and was greatly aggravated by the expulsion of all the electoral officials from within its walls. Whereupon the irritated archbishop called together a great body of troops and laid siege to the city. The account given by a contemporary writer of this siege is quaint and curious,* and considerably illustrates the mode of warfare practised at that period.

“On the eve of St. John,” says this old chronicler, “in the year of grace 1497, John, of Baden, at the head of the Suabian League, and his own troops, appeared before Boppard, and took possession of the great cloister,† in which he stationed seven hundred foot soldiers. That was a great blow to the citizens: but still they persisted in holding out against him.

The vassals, great and small, of the see of Treves were all required to appear before the city by a certain day, munitioned and provisioned for war; and they so appeared accordingly—the nobles, the knights, and the peasantry. The two first composed the besieging force; the last were employed in digging entrenchments and raising counter-fortifications. The monasteries and convents of the archdiocese furnished wagons for the transport of the baggage, and also for the removal of the earth necessary in the construction of the works. Three noble knights were appointed to undertake the whole of this labour, and see that it was properly executed.

“Four gulden a month ‡ was the pay of each soldier in the

* “Beschreibung der Belagerung,” von Peter Meier. Meyer was private secretary to the elector of Treves, John of Baden.

† The nunnery of Marienburg, on the hill which overlooks Boppard. This famous convent, now a cotton manufactory, was celebrated as the abode of noble ladies of the palatinate alone. The usual number within its walls was from forty to fifty.

‡ Somewhere about a pound sterling of the present currency—allowing the value of money to be only three times increased since then.

army; but the knights and the nobles served cost free, at their own expense, as they were bound to do by the terms of their fee. Most of them, also, maintained their own troopers; and some of them foot soldiers to boot.

“Each of the princes of the league placed a chief officer over his own forces, who had the title of marshal. The cannon were loaded with stone bullets: but the troops of the palatinate used iron bullets; and their artillery in general, was the best ordered, and the best served of the entire ordnance.

“The elector of Mainz, who was bound to furnish a force of six hundred men, contributed not a single soldier; and the elector of Cologne despatched only two knights, who came no nearer than Andernach, but there remained under pretence of the arrival of the remainder of the contingent; which was never sent, and consequently never came.

“But Philip, pfalzgraf of the Rhine, came at the head of two hundred horse and four hundred foot-folk: and the very same evening he commenced to play on the town with a piece of his own cannon, which he had planted before the St. Martin's cloister.

“The landgraf of Hesse likewise sent six hundred men; he himself lying by with eighty knights, a little above Branbach, to be in readiness for any emergency. Sir Bertram of Nesselrode was the commander of the contingents from the Counts of Julich and Birkenfeldt.

“The great piece of battering artillery, named the ‘Ungracious,’ was directed against Schwalbach's house in the town; and a lesser piece of cannon, a culverin, and six arquebuses, were appointed to support it. A hundred and sixty huge stone bullets were the ammunition appointed for it; but there was more ammunition of a lesser size, of which it is not needful to make mention. To the service of this gun there were attached a chief cannonier, six carpenters, a stone-mason, and eight assistants.

“The other principal piece of heavy ordnance lay near the castle gate, opposite a turret in the town wall. This had the name of ‘Swiftly;’ and swiftly did it do its work. The bullets from its mouth battered down the turret till it fell upon the wall, and then both sunk in together. The fragments of stone from

the broken balls, and from the broken walls, flew about in the town like hail.

“Near this lay another piece of artillery, the property of Christoph, markgraf of Baden. It was named ‘Windeck;’ and it shot down a large tower in a very short time.

“The elector of Treves, John of Baden, together with the margraf of Baden, his brother, the counts of Nassau, Sain, Solms, Westerburg, and Oberstein, the Rheingrafs, the Baron of Winnenburg, and other nobles and knights, remained in the great nunnery on the hill to the rear of Boppart; and in the valley behind it, along the rugged road which leads to the Hundsrück mountains, stood their tents, their baggage, and their horses.

“On the other side of the Rhine were planted some artillery, the contingent of Würtemberg, which annoyed the town very much; and all the places above and below Boppart were in possession of the besiegers, so that no assistance could reach the citizens from any quarter, were it forthcoming. There were about twelve thousand troops in all engaged in this siege.

“In the meanwhile, provisions failed so in the town that the soldiery could obtain no food but bread and wine; and this led to an intention of surrender on the part of the citizens. Accordingly, through the mediation of John, duke of Bavaria, the Count of Sponheim, and Sir Bertram von Nesselrode, an accommodation was effected between the elector and these his subjects; by means of which his sovereignty was again fully recognised, and they were placed on the same footing with regard to the electorate as they had been before this outbreak.”

Thus ended the siege of Boppart.

The archbishop, however, found it more difficult to deal with his auxiliaries than with his rebellious subjects; for a body of six hundred of these soldiers of fortune, discontented at the obscuration of all their bright prospects of plunder, attacked the city, swearing that “the devil should have their souls if they went without booty;” and were repulsed only with considerable loss.

Boppart, in the year 1501, was wrested for a while from the electorate of Treves, by the boldness and daring of a noble knight of the city, John of Elz. On the day of the Epiphany, during the celebration of high mass, he appeared before the place

on the river-side, and took possession, without hinderance, of all the posts held by the electoral officers and troops. The plea set up for this proceeding was an infringement on the privileges of the citizens. The difference, however, was soon after adjusted, and the city returned to its allegiance to Treves.

In the servile war, which accompanied the reformation, and kept pace with its progress on the shores of the Rhine, Boppart was not behindhand. The populace, sympathizing with their brethren, the peasants of the Rhein Gau—of whose excesses more in another page—broke loose from all restraint, set the laws at defiance, deposed the regularly elected magistracy, and selected others from their own ranks in their stead. This insurrection was, however, soon put an end to ; and the ringleaders underwent various degrees of punishment.

Little more remains to be said of Boppart. It shared the fate of almost all the Rhenish towns in the thirty years' war, being alternately possessed by every party ; and in the succeeding commotions which shook central Europe it had its full share of affliction and suffering. But it boots not to enter on these topics here ; and so we shall pass to others more in unison with the purport of these volumes.

Like all cities of the kind, in the middle ages, Boppart had a nominal protector in the head of a noble family resident in the vicinity.

For a succession of ages the heads of the ancient house of Bayer, who usually dwelt in the valley behind Marienburg, which nearly overhangs the town, or in one of the castles of Liebenstein or Sternberg (the Brothers), on the opposite side of the river, both of which are said to have belonged to this family anterior to the twelfth century, were the protectors of this city. Little now remains of this race of knights and nobles, once among the most powerful and important on the Rhine ; and tradition has alone preserved the remembrance of one—the chief of his name in the twelfth century—whose life was wicked, and whose death, though glorious, was most miserable. The true and the false are so blended together in the story of his life, as handed down to posterity, that it is impossible to separate them. It is a story of sin, and shame, and sorrow.

THE KNIGHT AND HIS LADYE-LOVE,

Sir Conrad Bayer, of Boppart, the first of his family, in the latter part of the twelfth century, was what is generally termed in the present day "a good fellow." That is, he would, if occasion offered, quarrel without much care as to the justice of the cause; carouse of the deepest when he had company at his table; court fair maids when he had nothing else on hands, and then abandon them as easily as he had won them; and, in short, do every thing that a heedless man may do, whose passions know no control, and whose prosperity has never been impinged on. In other respects, he had many excellent qualities: — he was open, generous, brave; and he was tolerably well versed in all the accomplishments of the period. But the curse of his life was his levity of heart; and that which poisoned his existence in the very prime of his manhood was his infidelity in love.

At this period Frederic the First (Barbarossa) led the flower of the German chivalry to the third crusade, in conjunction with Richard Cœur de Lion of England, and Philip Augustus of France. But although the Rhenish knights and nobles flocked

in thousands to his standard, Sir Conrad Bayer of Boppart was not among the champions of the cross at the outset of the expedition. The cause of his stay was ostensibly the protection of Boppart from a formidable band of robbers that carried on their depredations in the vicinity; but some, who were in the secret, attributed it quite as much to the charms of a fair lady who lived in a neighbouring castle, its only warden, in the absence of her brother with the crusaders. Her Christian name was Maria: the patronymic of her family has not been transmitted to posterity. Conrad visited the castle where she lived much oftener than neighbourly feeling alone would warrant; and Maria saw him each time with greater pleasure than mere friendship ever yet exhibited. The result may be guessed at, but not mentioned. His demeanour became colder towards her day after day; while day after day her love for him seemed but to increase. No longer was he punctual in his appointments with her; in process of time, weeks—nay, months—passed over without a visit from him; and she was finally overwhelmed with misery when a report reached her that he was just about to embark for the East to join the forces of the cross in Palestine. In vain did she plead her love, with all the fervid eloquence of passion, when they next met for a few moments—it was now for a few moments only: in vain did she despatch letter after letter to him during his absence from her. To the first she received no reply, except an averted countenance and a loveless look could be construed into one; to the second his uniform answer was, that he had no mind to marry then, for that a free and independent life suited him the best. “But,” his last letter cruelly ended, “if I marry at all, which is by no means likely, mayhap you shall be at the bridal, though you may assure yourself you shall not be the bride.” Maria’s heart was crushed, as if by the fall of a mountain, when she read this dreadful reply; she wrote to him no more; but she resolved to put in execution, without further delay, a plan which she had some time thought of. In the meanwhile the restless, and, perhaps, unhappy Conrad, made ready to set forth for Asia; and from morning until night his castle resounded with the clang of hammers forging corslets and other necessary pieces of armour, the tramp of steeds, the tread of armed retainers passing to and

fro, and, in short, with every note of preparation which precedes or attends a great warlike expedition. In due time his arrangements were all completed; and at the head of a goodly band of his friends and vassals he set forth on his long and toilsome journey.

It was a lovely morning, in the early part of spring, when they galloped forth the castle portals, and by the light of the gray dawn mustered in order on the shores of the river. Proudly and gaily rode Conrad, their chief, in advance. The neighing of the steeds—the shouts of the soldiers—the song of the boatmen on the river waiting to receive them in their pennoned barques—the blessings of the crowd—gave the whole scene a tone and character of the highest excitement. They neared the shore—Conrad still in advance,—when a knight, armed cap-à-pie, with visor closed, lance in rest, and glaive unsheathed, was seen urging his fiery steed in “hot haste” towards them.

“Hold!” cried the youth; for such his weak voice bewrayed him—“hold, Sir Conrad Bayer, of Boppard. Leave not this land until thou answer to me for thy misdeeds; or until I fall by thy hand. I tell thee to thy teeth, in the face of thy friends and thy followers, that thou art a false and a faithless traitor—that thou art unworthy the name of knight!”

The retinue of Conrad rushed towards the audacious stranger; twice a hundred lances were at once placed in rest to pierce him through; twice a hundred swords gleamed high in air to drink his blood; the bowmen bent their bows on him; his death was certain. But Conrad quickly interposed; and ordered them to retire to a thicket in the rear, there to wait the issue of the rencontre. This done, he thus addressed his assailant:—

“Bold boy, who art thou?”

“Once thy friend, but now thy deadly foe,” was the reply.

“One or both of us shall fall this day.”

“I know thee not, youth,” continued Conrad; “why should I slay thee?”

“Know me then, now, to thy eternal disgrace,” exclaimed the stranger. “In me behold the brother of the betrayed Maria; and let thy sight be blasted for ever! I have come from afar to obtain satisfaction for the injuries you have inflicted on her; I have journeyed from the plains of Palestine hither to have thy

life. To the battle, villain!—to the battle! or I shall call thee coward as well as traitor!”

“But,” again interposed Conrad, touched, perhaps, through the youth of his opponent, with a feeling something akin to pity, “how may I know that thou art what thou describest thyself to be? I am a noble knight, and may not disgrace my sword with one below my degree. Where are thy proofs?”

“They are here!” exclaimed the impetuous boy. “Behold the blazon of our house,—a house as ancient and as noble as thine.”

He raised his shield, as he spoke, and shewed to Conrad the arms of his betrayed fair one’s family—a golden lion in a field azure.

“Wouldst thou more?” he inquired tauntingly.

“Nay,” rejoined Conrad, “thy blood be on thy own head. If thou’dst slain fifty Saracens, thou diest thyself this day. Make speedy shrift, for short space have you to live.”

“God be with the right!” shouted the youth.

Each wheeled round his steed, and drew back a few paces to take ground: then laying their lances in rest, they rushed on each other with the fury of a whirlwind. Both were struck at the same moment; and both were unhorsed together: but, besides the fall, neither sustained any injury—thanks to the excellent temper of their mail. Now came the tug of war. Conrad’s blood was up—to be unhorsed by a boy—he one of the best cavaliers of the day—it was a thing not to be borne. He drew forth his broad, bright falchion: his antagonist did the same: the fight then began in good earnest. It was evident, however, that the latter was less expert in the sword exercise than the former: though he managed, notwithstanding, to inflict a deep gash on his adversary’s arm. This maddened Conrad more than ever: he showered his blows so “quick, thick, and heavy,” that the weak youth he had to contend with could no longer withstand their force and effect. He fell mortally wounded.

In accordance with the customs of chivalry, the victor hastened to unlace the helm of the vanquished, and offer him every assistance at hand in this his extremity. What was the horror of Conrad, while divesting his prostrate opponent’s head of that part of his heavy armour, to behold the long luxuriant

tresses of a female roll out heavily from beneath it. With an unsteady hand, as ominous of evil, he raised the casque of the dying stranger.

God of heaven!—it was Maria!

“Conrad,” she spake, as the death-rattle sounded in her throat, and the struggle of immediate dissolution convulsed every muscle of her delicate frame,—“Conrad, I forgive thee.”

It were idle to attempt a description of the grief of the reckless, wretched knight.

“Conrad,” she continued, “take it not thus to heart—I die. The fault was mine more than thine. I could not live without thy love—so I resolved to perish by thy hand. My wish is accomplished. Think of me kindly, when you think of me at all; and should a recollection of the lost Maria ever cross your mind, remember only her love and devotion for thee—forget, forget her folly. God bless you, my beloved Conrad. Farewell!”

The fair maiden, with these words, sunk back on her broken shield and expired. That Saviour who called Magdalen sister, was surely merciful to poor Maria.

Sir Conrad Bayer, of Boppard, was from that hour forth an altered man. Postponing for a period his intended departure for Palestine, he had the body of the hapless maiden, the victim of his perfidy, transported to the summit of the Kreutzberg, which lies beside the town of Boppard, and there interred with honourable burial. He then bestowed two-thirds of his immense estates in perpetuity upon some pious priests who dwelt on the mountain, conditionally that they should erect a magnificent nunnery over the remains of Maria, and bestow upon the building her name. Hence the convent of Marienberg, once the proudest and most opulent on the Rhine. This done, he resumed his suspended plan, and set forth in all haste for Syria.

Arrived at Acre, he joined the crusading army before the city, as one of the Knights Templars, to which noble order his birth and wealth secured him immediate admittance; and, under Richard Cœur de Lion, he was soon engaged in the ever memorable siege and storm of that renowned place. But though he fought only to find death on the field, he could find

nothing but glory; the breath of the destroying angel passed him by unharmed; his hour had not come. At length, when the city had been won—when a partial truce was proclaimed—when the excitement of battle and danger was over, he was found pierced to the heart on the ramparts by a stray shaft, from a hand not known, as he walked to and fro in the cool of the night, lamenting his lost love, and execrating himself for his conduct to her. His last word was “Maria.” Thus perished Sir Conrad Bayer, of Boppart, who would have been happier if he had been better, and wiser if he had not so deeply sinned against love.

“ Where shall the traitor rest,
He the deceiver;
Who could win maiden’s breast,
Ruin, and leave her?”

The actual amount of truth or falsehood in this tradition there is at present no exact means of ascertaining: but ancient family documents place it beyond a doubt that a member of the noble family of Bayer of Boppart perished at Ptolemais posterior to the siege of that city: and the convent of Marienberg, which still exists, would seem to point to some passage in the history of that race, not altogether at variance with the main features of this legend.

On the other side of the Rhine, almost directly opposite Boppart, lies Kamp, supposed by some to have been the site of an ancient *castrum*, or camp, of the Romans; Bornhofen, a famous nunnery, secularised in 1814; and the celebrated castles of Liebenstein and Sternfels, commonly called “The Brothers,” as much, perhaps, from their singular contiguity to each other, as from the traditional circumstance of their being erected by two individuals standing in the close relationship indicated by the name.

Two of the many legends afloat among the dwellers on this shore of the river, respecting the origin of these romantic strongholds, are here offered. It is possible, that, like all tales of a similar class, they have some foundation in truth, and that a substratum of fact lies beneath the evidently fabulous super-

structure of the narrative : but how much of fact or how much of fable they contain is a matter which may never be ascertained, as time and change have swept away all authentic traces of their original history.

LIEBENSTEIN.—STERNBERG.

THE BROTHERS.

In the ancient days of German valour, and truth, and love, a noble knight, named Dietrich, was lord of both castles. Two sons, who were handsome, high-spirited youths, lived with him, also an orphan maiden, to whom he was guardian. The maiden was surpassingly beautiful ; and she was as good as she was lovely. Kind of heart, dovelike in manner, and gentle to all, she was beloved by every one : but she was more especially beloved by the brothers with whom she had grown up to woman's estate, in innocence and in peace. Both loved her, as I have said ; but one concealed his love from her, and "pined in thought:" while the other advanced his suit with all the impetuosity of his age and character. He was the younger of the two youths ; and his father looked auspiciously on the choice

BORNHOFEN & THE BROTHERS.

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he had made of the maiden ; for she was heiress to large possessions in the vicinity of his estates.

“Minna, my lass,” said the old knight to her one day, as they all sate together in the chamber of dais after the dinner-hour—“my boys love you, will you be the bride of one or other of them?”

The maiden blushed ; and the youths blushed also.

“Come, come,” continued the old knight, “as you are not averse to marriage, make your election.”

She looked on the two handsome young men, who involuntarily flung themselves on their knees at her feet ; and she was soon aware of the passion which burned in their bosoms. She looked again, and her glance fell on the younger brother : but still she was silent.

“Well, well,” said Conrad, the elder, “I see how it is : you love Heinrich better than you love me. Be it so. He is more worthy of your affections.”

He took their hands and joined them together ; then sighing deeply, he left the apartment.

The old knight gave the happy pair his blessing ; fixed a near day for their nuptials ; and immediately followed his son for the purpose of condoling with him in his sorrow.

Conrad, however, was inconsolable ; and day after day passed over without bringing him peace. He did not envy his brother ; but he felt that his own happiness was entirely destroyed. Nay, he discovered, to his deep consternation, that every hour only increased his love for Minna ; and that the more he saw of her, the more his great loss was made evident to him. It was idle—nay, it was wicked—he argued, to remain any longer under the influence of her charms ; so he even resolved to drop down the river to Rhens, where the prince palatine of the Rhine then held his court, and pray to be enrolled among his followers. He did so, shortly after ; and was received with great honour, and at once admitted to the service of his sovereign.

About this time it was that St. Bernard of Clairvaux was employed in preaching the second crusade ; and all the German knights and nobles were gathered together at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, where the holy abbot was then entertained with the greatest honours by the Emperor Conrad. Although the

saint spoke in a tongue to which they were strangers, still the spirit of his eloquence caught their souls like wild-fire ; and every castle and fortalice in the land daily poured out its best and bravest defenders, bearing the crusader's badge, the red cross, on their surcoat, and wending their way in every direction, by land and by water, to far distant Palestine. Among the nobles who were thus assembled at Frankfort, were the old knight, Sir Dietrich, and his younger son, Heinrich. Both caught the contagion of zeal for the cause of the Lord, which the holy man's very presence inspired even in all who only saw him ; and each felt equally desirous to go forth and rescue the scene of the Saviour's sufferings from the power of the cruel and scoffing infidels. But it could not be. Sir Dietrich was old and infirm ; besides which, his broad lands required a vigilant guardian, and his numerous vassals a beloved chief. Heinrich had no considerations of this kind to detain him in Europe ; though he had another not less, but usually more powerful, in the person of his betrothed bride, Minna. All considerations, however, gave way to the wild impulse which urged him onward to join the crusaders ; and, truth must be told, he found no opposition from his father, who should have known better and acted far otherwise. It was decided that the youth should proceed, with the army of the emperor, to the Holy Land : and, on his return to the Rhine, it was settled that he should lead his Minna to the altar. He immediately set out—bewept bitterly by the deserted maiden ;—and, with a small body of his father's boldest retainers, joined the imperial standard at Frankfort-on-the-Maine.

Soon after his departure, old Sir Dietrich died ; and Conrad, his elder son, was summoned from Rhens to take possession of his titles and property. Again was the heart of the young knight troubled with love for his brother's betrothed, Minna ; but again he mastered his passion by a powerful effort of his understanding. From thenceforward he learned to look on her as a beloved sister ; and he watched over her with all the affection—and something more—of a fond brother. Two years thus sped over ; they sped, however, without bringing any intelligence of Heinrich. At the expiration of that period a rumour reached the shores of the Rhine, and speedily found its way to Liebenstein, that he was on his return ; but it also trumpeted forth that he had

been false to his plighted troth to Minna, and was now the husband of a beautiful Greek lady. It was a rumour; alas! too true! Unabashed, and with cruel heart, he did return, his fair Greek with him as his bride; and took up his abode in Sternfels, the opposite castle to that in which dwelt his brother and the betrayed and broken-hearted Minna. The struggle was too severe for the feelings of the maid: she could no longer live in his sight; and she soon after took the veil in the neighbouring convent of Bornhofen.

Sir Conrad's noble heart burned with indignation at the treachery of his brother. When the *avant courier* which announced the coming of the faithless knight entered his castle, to tell him of his near arrival, the only reply he made was to fling his gauntlet on the floor.

"Take that," he said, "to my brother: that is my only answer. Say that we are brothers no longer. I defy him to mortal combat as a faitour and a false knight."

The messenger did as he was directed; and Conrad immediately summoned his vassals. All these proceedings were communicated to Minna by a confidential servant of her deceased father.

The crusader, as it has been already stated, arrived in due course at his own castle of Sternfels; and at once prepared for the deadly strife to which his elder brother had bade him. He, too, summoned all his vassals to the field; and a near day was fixed for the deadly and unnatural encounter. Their forces met on the river shore, below their castles, and a mortal combat at once ensued between the brothers. It lasted long—a whole summer's day; but neither had the advantage of the other. At length, just as Conrad was on the point of overcoming his adversary, an angel form stood between the combatants, and, with a wave of her hand, stayed the uplifted glaive which was about to fall on the guilty head of Heinrich. It was Minna! Minna, who had left her holy and peaceful dwelling to stay the fierce and unholy strife, of which she was the innocent and unhappy cause.

"Cease, impious men!" she said; "cease! put up your murderous weapons, and be at peace. The curse of God on the first murderer will be the only honour of whichsoever conquers: the abhorrence of man will accompany the sentence pronounced

by God. He who survives shall be outcast and abandoned of all : his name shall perish, unless it be for the purpose of execration. Put up your swords. Let not the hand of either be stained with the blood of his father's son, for the sake of one a mere stranger. What am I that you should slay one another for me ?”

This, and much more, did she say ; and her appeal so won on the hearts of the brothers, that they shortly gave over, and stretched forth to each other the hand of peace. When her pious work was complete, she went as she came : and thenceforward never quitted her lowly cell, until she was borne from it, a few months after, to an early grave. Peace to her spirit !

All was sorrow in Liebenstein when her death was made known, for she had acquired the affections of every one about her. Conrad was not to be comforted. His love for her, pure as herself, had survived all the vicissitudes of chance and change, like one of those lights found in ancient sepulchres, after the lapse of hundreds of ages. Not so with Heinrich : his castle was the abode of gaiety ; and his Greek bride never gave him peace until he had assembled within its walls all the chivalry of the palatinate. But he was not the more happy withal ; for his heart was corroded by care at the levity of his wife ; and ever and anon the image of his lost Minna would flit reproachfully before his mind's eye. Then would he contrast what he was with what he might have been ; the husband of a wanton, when he could have had to wife all but an angel : and then remorse, and deep, bitter grief, would absorb all his feelings and crush his heart together. Meanwhile, matters grew worse and worse every day ; the Greek dame gave encouragement to all ; and Heinrich's name had become a by-word of contempt among the young Rhenish nobility.

Conrad was aware of the infidelity of his brother's wife long before her spouse suspected her of aught but want of discretion. He communicated the fact to him ; and Heinrich swore to be avenged. The injured husband would have slain her with his own hands ; but the interposition of his brother prevented her murder. As it was, he drove her from his doors with curses and reproaches ; and she departed, laughing gaily,

to seek a protection among her numerous lovers — his most excellent friends.

In this moment of dool, and wretchedness, and despair, Conrad shewed the true nobleness of his nature. He tried to alleviate his brother's anguish by every mode which he thought would be effectual; and he finally succeeded, by his patient assiduity, in somewhat calming the emotions of his afflicted spirit.

"Come, Heinrich," said he, as they one day sat together alone; "come, let us live single from henceforward; to the end that we may the more highly honour the memory of that virtuous maiden who died for one of us."

Heinrich wept like a child. The brothers thenceforward lived single: and, ere long, they died so. The noble stock, of which they were the last shoots, perished with them; and their castles fell into desolation and ruin.

Since then, these now crumbling towers, which look so sorrowfully in their age and decay on the smiling scene below, on the vine-clad hills, the bounding river, and the distant pastures on the other side of the stream, have been named **THE BROTHERS**.

Another tradition, however, differs materially from this. A versified translation is attempted here, of a very sweet ballad on the subject by a fair poetess, who has made the romantic shores of the Rhine sometime vocal with her melody.*

Two brothers meet in bloody strife,
With sword, and shield, and spear:
From Liebenstein the elder comes—
From yonder castle drear.

The younger is from Sternfels.
Mark you their quickened breath!
They battle for a blooming bride—
They battle to the death!

* Adelheid von Stolterfoth. "Rhein. Kreise." Frankfort-on-the-Maine. Karl Jugel, 1835.

Erst were they one ; each wicked deed
United found them aye ;
And many a weary wanderer
They smote by night and day.

And once a palmer, sad and hoar,
Upon his pious way,
They set upon, and stole his store,
In death as low he lay.

His gray hairs touch'd their hard hearts not,
His prayers but made them worse :
So, dying, upon this cruel twain
He cast a fearful curse !

He cursed them with his last, last breath,
He cursed them through their life ;
And he foretold their woful end
In most unnatural strife.

And now his curse has come to pass—
By their own hands they die !
Their gaping wounds give out the life,
As low o' the earth they lie.

But see ! a lovely maiden comes !—
She stands this twain before :
Alas ! too late she comes to save—
That awful battle 's o'er !

“ Oh, say,” thus gasp'd the elder forth,
He writhed, and scarce could see,
“ Hast not loved me alone ? Oh, Heaven !
Would thou'dst been all to me !”

“ Peace, fool !” the younger sternly, thus :
“ Fool, as thou be'st, depart ;
Pass hence, unwept of her, for mine
Alone has been her heart !”

A fierce, fell glance, the elder gave,
And grasp'd his blood-stained sword—
Then backward fell, and yielded life,
And died without a word !

The younger grimly gazed on him :
That gaze—it was his last !
For death his dim eye shrouded soon—
And life's light from it pass'd.

And that sweet maid, so mild of mood ;
For neither knew she love :
The fierce, wild passion of that pair,
Her heart did never move.

But to appease offended Heaven—
To win these sinners grace—
She made a vow, from this fair world
To hide for aye her face.

One deep, deep grave is dug for both ;
They're buried where they fell ;
But their wicked lives and wretched death
Are still remembered well.

Soon from the neighbouring cloister's choir
This prayer is put to Heaven :
“ Pardon them, Lord, what they have done—
Oh, be their sins forgiven ! ”

HIRZENACH.

Higher up the river, on the opposite bank, lies the little hamlet of Hirzenach, with its modest church, its neat houses, and its crumbling ruins of the ancient priory of the abbots of Siegberg. This pretty hamlet is the scene of the subsequent tradition.

ST. ANDREW'S NIGHT.

Superstitious maidens in Germany, as well as elsewhere, firmly believe that there are four nights in the year wherein, on the performance of certain forbidden rites and magical incantations, they will be permitted to see whomsoever Providence has destined for their future husband. These nights are St. Andrew's night, St. Thomas's night, Christmas night, and New Year's night. The practice is still very common among the educated as well as the ignorant; and superior intelligence has not succeeded in securing exemption to its fair possessors from that prying frailty, and that curious weakness, which are at once the blessing and the bane of their gentle sex.

It is not a century since a maiden of Hirzenach performed these forbidden rites, and sought to peep into the page of futurity. Behold what happened to her in consequence of this unholy curiosity.

According to the tradition, and the custom still observed in such cases, she laid a table at midnight in her father's kitchen, and covering it over with a clean white cloth, she set thereon two plates and two knives. Forks there were none placed on it, because they are prohibited by the form of the incantation. In the middle of the board stood a loaf of newly baked bread, kneaded under a peculiar conjunction of the planets. Two double-edged knives were inclosed in this loaf, which had been baked the hour immediately before midnight. As the church clock struck twelve, the maiden rose and threw open the outer door: then standing just within the threshold, she took the shift she had worn for a week, to that morning, in compliance with the form of the incantation, and rolling it up tightly, into a rude kind of ball, she flung it as far outwards in the direction of the river as her strength permitted. At the same time she chanted these rhymes in a low monotonous tone:

“ My bread it is baked,
And my fire it is raked,
And my banquet is ready, as you may see :
Then come, lover, come,
Let this be thy home :
Come hither and eat of this fare with me.”

When she had repeated them three several times, she retired from the door, still leaving it open, and took her place at the table. She had, however, scarcely sat herself down, when a rushing wind was heard without, and a voice of wailing filled the apartment. In a moment more the candle began to flicker, and then the flame slowly changed its colour to a livid blue, giving out only light sufficient to make the "darkness visible." As she sat terrified in this "dim obscure," the form of a man was seen to stand at the door, waiting as if for permission to enter. The maiden was really stout of heart; though she had quailed a little at the sights and sounds indicative of supernatural agency by which she was surrounded; and, like many a man, dreaded the devil she had herself raised. She, therefore, soon recovered sufficient resolution to repeat the requisite invitation, by which the charm was rendered complete.

"Enter, enter, and be of good cheer,
Husband of mine, you are welcome here;
Husband of mine, that is to be,
Enter and take your place by me:
Take your place, my own sweet heart,
Then are we joined for never to part."

When she had concluded, the strange visitant stalked slowly into the room, and sat down at the table beside her. In accordance with the pious lessons of her parents, imprinted on her tender mind in her days of innocence and youth, she was about to begin the meal with a prayer, and to evoke a blessing on the food by way of grace,—

"But ere ever a prayer had gush'd,
A wicked whisper came and made
Her heart as dry as dust."

She remembered the time, the place, the circumstances—the awful hour, the unseemly situation, and the unholy rite in which she was engaged,—and with a suppressed sigh she desisted. The phantom husband, meanwhile, sat motionless for some moments, looking neither to the right nor to the left, at her or from her, but keeping his stony eyes firmly fixed upon the board. Then, striking his knife, which, it should be mentioned, he held

open in his hand when he entered the apartment, into the loaf, he rose slowly from the table, and, even as she looked at him attentively, melted into thin air before her eyes. She had seen enough, however, to recognize in him the son of a near neighbour in the village, to whom she had long been secretly attached; and with a mind partly at ease, as to the future for her, she set about putting the apartment to rights, and removing every trace of that foul incantation from the possibility of her parents' knowledge. When she came to examine the loaf, according to the custom of those who practise such profane arts, she found only one knife in it—and that was not one of her own;—the other two placed there by her had disappeared along with the phantom. Her shift lay at her feet, torn to tatters. So far, so good.

In seven days from that hour her appointed lover wooed her accordingly: and in seven times seven more she was a wedded bride. Seven years she lived happily with her spouse, and she became, in that period, the mother of seven beautiful children. About the end of the seventh year, however, she began to feel an alteration in her affection for her husband; and an alienation which she could not account for from her dear children. The unholy thoughts of former days, long forgotten by her, grew now to be well remembered; and assumed a vividness which occasionally gave her much trouble. No longer was she pleased with the attentions of her husband; they had some time ceased to charm her: nay, she almost loathed him. And her children,—many and many a time, in her lucid intervals of feeling, would she bitterly bewail the change which had been wrought upon her, in respect of the unbounded affection which she once felt for the little innocents, all unconscious as they were of their mother's lack of love for them. In this struggle of good and bad feelings, the conflict of reason and of passion, the latter had the upper hand; and the matron surrendered herself up to the victor.

“Once more,” she said, as the anniversary of St. Andrew approached, “once more I'll try my luck on St. Andrew's night. I'm tired of Heinrich (her husband), sick to the death of him. Yes, I'll see who shall be my next husband; for another I'm resolved to have, come what will.”

On St. Andrew's night, accordingly, availing herself of some pretence or other, she sat up to midnight, leaving her husband

and children to proceed to bed before her. The necessary preparations had been all completed;—the table was set—the charmed loaf baked and placed upon it—the outer door opened—and the form of incantation recited.

Now, it so happened, that her husband had dreamed a strange dream which troubled him much;—he dreamed three several times, that a form, garbed in long, dark, flowing robes, stood beside his bed, and bade him search the chest which lay at its foot; telling at the same time, that he would there find something that he alone should have in his own possession. He could not sleep after the third time of dreaming this dream; and he felt impelled to act as he had been directed by the visionary being of his sleep. He arose accordingly, and taking the light which always burned in the bed-chamber, he proceeded to search the chest indicated to him. The first thing which struck his eye was his own knife, lost, as he deemed, exactly seven years before;—it lay a-top of a torn garment—the inner garment, evidently, of his wife. All at once the truth flashed upon his mind, and conviction rushed suddenly on his soul. Seizing the rusted weapon, he rushed from the room, and hastened to find his foolish bride.

She had concluded the incantation:—the rushing sound as of the wings of the wind was heard without; the voice of wailing was heard within; and a form stood on the threshold awaiting permission to enter, in accordance with the process of the charm. But it was not the form of a man,—it was still less the figure of a lover: the form was that of death—the figure was a skeleton. In one hand the hideous object held an hour-glass; in the other, the inevitable scythe. The weapon was raised aloft in attitude to strike, even as the mower cuts down the living offspring of the meadow-lands; the hour-glass had but a few, a very few grains to run. The wretched woman shrunk into herself; and wildly averted her gaze from the fearful apparition.

Just at this moment her husband entered at the opposite door. His face was inflamed with rage; his eyes shot the fire of hatred and jealousy; his frame shook with unsuppressed passion; his countenance was distorted with anger and ill-will;—murder was in his whole aspect. In his hand he held the fatal knife; and he bared his arm to the elbow, as if to give him free use of the deadly instrument.

"Know you this, false woman?" he shouted, brandishing the well-remembered blade before her eyes; "Know you this? Oh! for the torture you inflicted on me that night; the agonies of hell may not match them: but I'll be revenged on you now."

"Mercy! mercy!" shrieked the lost creature, clinging to his knees; "mercy! mercy! mercy!"

"The mercy you shewed me, that mercy shall you have, and that only," replied the enraged man. "Yea, little of it did I meet with at your hands that terrible time. Oh! the pangs I suffered, the unspeakable horrors I endured that night, when you dragged me hither by the agency of all the demons of darkness:—Curse you! curse you!"

"Mercy! mercy!" still shrieked the miserable wife; "mercy! mercy! mercy!"

"Yes," he continued, gnashing his teeth as he spoke, until his mouth was one mass of clammy foam,—“Yes! this was the place—ay! yon is the table—see, even there is the very loaf! You would have another victim, would you?"

"Mercy! mercy! mercy!" still was her cry; "mercy! mercy! mercy!"

"Oh! the misery of that night, the wrong that I suffered, the pain that I felt; you would make another man your victim, mayhap me, once more. Never! never! never!" He clutched the knife fiercely as he said the words, and raised his hand on high in the attitude to strike.

"Mercy! mercy!" she shrieked; "mercy! mercy! mercy!"

"Take it," was all he answered, burying at the same moment the fatal point in her bosom.

She fell at his feet a corpse.

"And now," he spake solemnly and slowly, as a man on the eve of death might speak, "and now 'tis done, I die."

With these words he plunged the deadly point into his own heart also, and, falling down beside the body of his wife, expired without a groan.

This should be a warning to those maidens who indulge in unholy curiosity, and seek by unlawful means to fathom the depths of the future.

There are many similar superstitions interwoven with the four nights alluded to at the commencement of this tale, and

a great number of legends, of a like nature, are connected with them. Their identity, however, with the observances celebrated in Burns's famous poem, "Halloween," by rendering it unnecessary to more than make mention of them here, saves the trouble of entering on them in detail. Many of the stories based on them terminate tragically, as this just related; while others, but they are only few in comparison, have a "right merrie" end. But that will suffice as a sample.

KESTER.—EHRENTHAL.

Again, recrossing the river, in a direct line with Hirzenach on the other side, stands the little hamlet of Kester; behind which, at right angles with the course of the current at that particular point, runs far into the adjacent hills the deep and narrow valley of Ehrenthal. It is to this spot we would now attract the attention of the wanderer on the Rhine, the pilgrim of the beautiful, by which the scene is so abundantly surrounded.

Ehrenthal is a wild valley on the right bank of the Rhine, containing many mines of silver, copper, and lead, some of which have been worked from the earliest periods of local history and tradition. These mines are the residence of Gnomes, according to the belief of the neighbouring peasantry; and a thousand tales are told of them, in which the little subterranean denizens conspicuously figure. One of these legends runs thus:—

THE SHIFT AND THE SHROUD.

It was in the time that the valley of Ehrenthal belonged to the Barons of Thurnberg, which is ages long ago, that a steward of that noble house dwelt in Ober-Kester, to superintend the working of the mines, as well as to look after the extensive possessions of his lords. He was a hard-hearted man; and he made the miners, young and old, male and female, labour night and day without sufficient rest or sufficient food. It was the same in his own house: the lasses were overworked and underfed; indeed, they were half-starved. But what could they do? They had no remedy against him but patience. Among the maidens who

served him was one named Clara, the only child of an old miner who had been drowned by an efflux of water into the shaft which he was employed in sinking in Ehrenthal. She was fair and modest far beyond her condition, for she had been well brought up, by her deceased parents, in the love and fear of God; and she was beloved by all her fellow-servants, because of the goodness of her heart, and her readiness to do them, on all occasions, a kindness or a service. One of those who loved her the most was, like her father, the foreman of a mine. They had known each other, as it were, from infancy; they had lived in contiguous houses; their parents were ever friends; and few of their acquaintance doubted that they would be married, when they had attained a fitting age. Was it then to be wondered at, if Clara loved young Benno as fondly as he loved her? But they were both serfs of the Lord of Thurnberg; and, before they could wed, it was requisite that they should have his permission to do so. The Lord of Thurnberg, however, was then absent in the wars; and this steward exercised his power during his absence. To him, therefore, they applied; but with a heavy heart, for they well knew his ill-nature; and Clara had strong reasons besides to suspect that he looked on her with an eye of evil desire. It was even as they had anticipated. Although there was no reasonable pretence on his part for refusing consent in the name of his lord, yet he was not slow in finding one which served his purpose equally well. In vain were the prayers of the youth, the arguments of his parents, the tears of the maiden, and the promises of all parties; he was not to be moved by any thing they could say or do. The lovers went away despairing. One morning, very shortly after this occurrence, Clara seeing him in good humour, as she conceived, ventured again to open her suit to him, and entreat his consent to her union with Benno. He heard her with a complacency which gave her hope; and she proceeded until she wellnigh persuaded herself of his acquiescence.

“Come hither, lass,” said he.

She approached, cheerfully, the window at the casement of which he stood looking forth on the river that rolled glancingly onwards in the early sun-beams.

“See you yon grave?” asked he of the maiden, and he pointed to one on which the turf was fresh and green,

while around its edge were disposed the fairest flowers of the season.

Clara looked in the direction of his hand.

"Know you whose it is?" continued he.

"Oh, yes!" replied the maiden, bursting into a flood of passionate tears. "Alas! and woe is me! it is the grave of my dear, dear father and mother."

While she wept, as though she were inconsolable, the hard-hearted old steward looked on her with a mingled expression of malevolence and lust.

"I will that nettles be planted there," he went on.

Clara wiped the big tears from her eyes, and looked up at him with astonishment and indignation.

"Nettles on my parents' grave!" exclaimed she. "Never while I have a hand to pluck them—never shall noxious weeds shed their baneful influence on the last resting-place of those I love, while I have life."

"Do as you will, lass," he proceeded; "do as you will. But I have made a vow to myself, that until you have not alone planted nettles on that grave, but also spun out of them two garments, one for my winding-sheet, the other for thy bridal shift, I shall never consent to your union with Benno. Nay more, if there be an atom of stuff beyond what will exactly make them, or if there be an atom less, it shall be all the same. Marry him you may not."

With these words he left the window, and hurried from the apartment. As he passed through the adjoining chamber, the horror-struck maiden heard his fiendish laugh echoed a hundred-fold, as though a legion of demons repeated it in hellish chorus.

Poor Clara! What was to be done?

In the extremity of her distress, she could think of no other resource than crying; and to indulge herself in that sad pleasure she involuntarily, as it were, visited the grave of her parents. It would touch the heart of a stone to see the simple maiden weep, while she lay extended on the damp, cold sod, and to hear her innocent and artless, but deep and bitter, lamentations. As she lay in that state, she was aroused by a gentle tap on her shoulder.

"Marry, come up, my maid," squeaked a tiny voice, but withal a sweet one, "what do you here in the gray of the evening?"

Clara looked up, and saw a little old woman clad in an antique dress, with a high-crowned conical hat on her head, and an ebony, gold-headed stick in her hand.

“Dry your tears, lass,” continued the little creature, with a look of compassion and encouragement, which brought something like comfort to the maiden’s spirits; “dry your tears, and tell me what afflicts ye.”

Clara did as she was directed; and began to relate to the little creature all that had occurred between her and the steward. As the tale of wrong and oppression proceeded, the brow of the Gnome—for she was one of those subterranean beings—grew black as night: she shook her head violently; stamped with her little feet; and ever and anon struck her stick forcibly on the ground. When it was ended, she said to the maiden:—

“Courage, my lass! Courage! Be of good cheer. You shall have help. Come hither to-morrow.”

With that she traced a few lines on the sod; and then disappeared in a twinkling.

At the same hour the next evening, Clara, according to appointment, was at the grave of her parents; and at the same moment the little old woman appeared also, without giving the slightest previous intimation of her presence.

“Look ye now, my lass,” she said to the maiden, and as she spake she pointed to the grave.

Clara looked, and to her surprise and vexation saw that it was entirely overgrown with nettles in the space of the one night and day which had intervened since she last trimmed its verdure and weeded its flowers—her every-morning occupation.

“Never mind that! never mind that!” continued the little creature, who saw her feelings reflected in her face; “never mind that! It is all for the best. Now, pluck me these nettles, and then tie them up in a bundle, even as the flax-dressers do.”

It was a pleasure to poor Clara to clear her parents’ grave from these obscene weeds; and she executed the task with such alacrity, that not a nettle was to be seen on it in a few minutes.

“A good girl! a good girl!” muttered the old woman to herself. Then placing the bundle under her arm, she bade the maiden good night, and disappeared; first, however, intimating that she should shortly hear from her.

Not long after this, the steward went into a remote part of Ehrenthal, to visit some abandoned mines, with the view of again working them on an improved principle. As he approached the most ancient of these shafts, one which it was said had been closed since the days of the Romans, he perceived a little old woman sitting at its mouth, by the foot of an overgrown oak which shadowed all around, busily employed in spinning what seemed to him to be some of the finest flax his eyes had ever beheld. It was the Gnome who had consoled Clara ; and that mine had been her dwelling-place from time immemorial.

" Well, old one," said he to her, " what do you spin ? A bridal bed-gown, eh ? "

" A bridal bed-gown and a death-shirt," replied the old lady. " Both at your command, Sir Steward."

The wicked steward grew pale. The words were his own. He well remembered them.

" Both at your command," continued the little creature, all the while never appearing to raise her eyes from the thread. " The shirt for your shroud, and the bed-gown for Clara's bridal."

" That is beautiful flax," observed he, trying to look unconcerned ; and then, as though he would drive away dread by the exercise of his ill-humours, he added, after a pause, " You have certainly stolen it from my stock. I'll have you punished for it ! "

" Not at all," replied she, unmoved by his accusation and his threat ; " not at all, Sir Steward. It is made from the nettles that grow on the grave of poor Clara's parents."

He held no further converse with her, but returned home at once. He felt a presentiment of some approaching evil, and his good angel whispered to him the means to avert it, or, rather, to atone in some measure for his past sins ; but the bad spirit which held him in thrall was at hand, and the feeling of years is not to be effaced in an hour. While he hesitated day after day, for the three succeeding weeks, whether he would consent to Clara's marriage or not ; on the morning of the twenty-first from that on which he had assigned her the painful task already told, under a penalty, if possible, more painful still, that maiden entered his apartment. She bore in her hand a small bundle,

in which, carefully covered up, were two garments of what looked like very fine linen cloth.

“Here,” said she, as she unfolded and held them up to his view, “here are the garments you would that I wove from the nettles which grew on my parents’ grave; a death-shirt for you, and a bridal bed-gown for me. The condition is accomplished on my part; I now claim its accomplishment by you. I now require, as a right, your assent to our union.”

“Well, lass,” he spake, while his heart shook within him, “you shall have it—you shall have it to-morrow or the day after—the first leisure day I have, and I shall attend the ceremony of your marriage myself. What say you to that, eh?”

“I’ll have it now,” said she, spiritedly. “I’ll have it here. It is my right.”

She called the domestics together; and in their presence she again required his consent, as a right, not as a favour.

He could not now refuse; so he gave it, but with as bad a grace as possible. All the domestics congratulated her, for she was a general favourite among her fellows; and there was much rejoicing among the friends and companions of her youth in the neighbourhood.

That evening all necessary preparations were made for the nuptials, which it was fixed should take place the following morning.

Clara was happy, and so was Benno; but how was the sinful steward?

It was a miserable night with him that which ensued. He could not sleep, he could not rest, he found no quiet any where, no repose within or without. The hand of Heaven lay heavy on him; he was now about to receive the recompense of an ill-spent life. A mortal sickness seized him in the course of the night; and before the morning had far advanced, he was a corpse. Just as the happy couple left the church where their union had been blessed by the priest, the death-knoll for the departed struck on their ear. They inquired who it was for, and the hurrying crowd replied the ‘*wicked steward!*’

This is the legend of Ehrenthal.

WERLAU.

On the opposite bank of the Rhine stands the village of Werlau, high up on the table-land which overlooks the river. Behind Werlau is an ancient, a very ancient mine, from which, in days of yore, silver is said to have been extracted in large quantities; and where, old stories relate, the Gnomes, or Children of the Earth, also held their abode. It is to the earliest period of the history of this mine, once famous in local lore, that the following legend refers; and, though another of the same nature has preceded it in these pages, it is still hoped that some interest will be found to attach to it, if for nothing else but the essential difference which subsists between them.

THE GNOME KING.

How long it is since these mines of Werlau have been first worked nobody now living knows; but if what is told of them be the truth, they must have existed and have been in full activity in the time of the Merovignian monarchs of Austrasia. One of them—the mines, not the monarchs—was the richest on the shores of the Rhine; indeed the quantities of silver which it is stated to have produced are almost incredible. However that may be, about the latter end of the reign of Dagobert, the first of these sovereigns of that name,* it was all of a sudden discovered to be impossible to work this mine any longer. The miners were driven from the pit with affright, in consequence of the strangest sights and most unearthly noises: and those who had the hardihood to return were in some cases buffeted by invisible hands to such a degree that their lives were despaired of. Some, too, saw spirits of a most frightful shape, while they pursued their labour; and many were terrified almost out of their senses at the hideous forms unceasingly assumed by these tormentors. In fact, the works were wholly suspended, and the treasury of the king sustained a heavy loss.

“What is to be done in this business?” said Dagobert one day to his chief adviser, the chancellor of the kingdom. “What

* A.D. 638—656.

shall we do? If this thing last longer, where may we find means to recruit our exhausted coffers?"

The chancellor, after much consideration, advised a journey to the mine; "For then," observed he, with the cunning of a churchman, and the caution of a lawyer, "you will be enabled to see things with your own eyes, and act accordingly. Mayhap, too, you will find that they are not quite so bad as they have been represented to you.

"Be it so," replied Dagobert.

Next morning the king and all his court set out from Andernach, where he then held his abode, and in due time arrived at the mouth of the mine, where he pitched his tents until the following day, spending the night on the spot. During the journey, the royal cavalcade, had been accompanied by thousands of the inhabitants of the surrounding country, attracted towards it by the pomp and glitter of the gorgeous procession. But although the monarch himself came in for a large share of popular admiration, the full tide of that most treacherous of all currents ran entirely in favour of his lovely daughter, who followed him in the courtly crowd; and she was worthy of all admiration, for far beyond the daughters of man was the fair Beatrix,

"Beautiful exceedingly."

"Now," spake Dagobert, when the first gray streak of dawn appeared on the skirts of the eastern horizon; "now prepare. Into yonder shaft shall I descend myself."

"Nay, my lord and master," interposed the chancellor, "you may not peril your precious life in such an undertaking. First let the trial be made in your royal presence, ere you attempt it yourself in your royal person."

"My lord, the chancellor speaks wisely," said the gentle Beatrix. "Even do, my father, as he desires."

Dagobert, pressed on all sides, at length consented. The courtiers surrounded the mouth of the pit; the countless multitude crowded around them, covering with a dense mass of human life the circumjacent plain.

"Now," said Dagobert, "begin. Who goes first? Fifty

gold pieces is his guerdon who descends into that shaft and returns alive."

Only one adventurer, however, offered himself for the feat; and he was not a miner, but a noble-looking youth, wholly unknown to all present. On the day preceding he had mingled with the crowd; and in the course of the journey had continued to keep close to the beautiful Beatrix, who seemed the sun of his existence—the light of his eyes—his hope, his joy, his love, his all.

"I will," he exclaimed; "but not for your guerdon. I go in honour of that lovely ladye. God prosper my undertaking!"

Beatrix blushed a rosy red; while Dagobert, half-smiling, half-frowning, beckoned him to enter the bucket. He entered it accordingly, and it descended without impediment into the darksome depths of the mine.

"My lord bishop," said the king to the chancellor, "methinks we have broken the spell. The youth is now below some half-hour. 'Twere better he came back to tell us of his success."

"Truly, sire," replied the churchman; "truly, he may ——"

"But, see! my father," exclaimed Beatrix, who had watched the whole proceeding with intense interest, but who had been silent until then,— "but see! see! The winch revolves of itself—the rope coils up without hands—the basket is ascending—and lo! behold it!"

"This is most strange, my lord bishop," observed Dagobert.

"Magic, sire! magic!" was all the frightened ecclesiastic could answer,— "magic, sire! magic!"

"Alas! alas! 'tis empty!" were the words of Beatrix, as she fell to the earth overpowered by her feelings. "Alas! alas! he is no more."

The courtly throng gathered around the prostrate, senseless maiden, and sought to restore her by every means which ingenuity could suggest; but their efforts were ineffectual to that purpose, and she still lay inanimate as a corpse, close by the mouth of the mine. Dagobert was overwhelmed with grief, and rendered almost wild with apprehension for his fair daughter's recovery. He stooped over her—he kissed her cold lips—he chafed her temples—he clapped her hands—he applied, in short,

every restorative which was considered efficacious, himself; but he only laboured in vain. As he was thus engaged, however, he became aware of a tumult in the surrounding throng; and in a minute more a little deformed being, pushing his way through the crowd, elbowing men and women, right and left, without apology and without ceremony, stood beside the maiden. At the same moment, Beatrix awoke from her trance, to the inexpressible delight of her sire, and the great pleasure of the surrounding concourse.

"Who be you?" asked Dagobert of the intrusive stranger. "What brings ye here?"

"I am here for your daughter," replied the dwarf,—"for your daughter Beatrix."

"Seize him," shouted the king in a towering passion,—
"seize him, and bind him."

A hundred hands were on the diminutive creature in a moment; and in another moment he stood pinioned before the enraged monarch and his fair daughter.

"Now fling him into yon pit," cried Dagobert. "He'll soon find the bottom. Off with him."

The diminutive deformity laughed aloud; it was a wild, shrill, unearthly cacaphony. He said nothing, however; but looked with an unflinching eye on Dagobert and Beatrix.

"Pardon him, my father," interposed the tender-hearted maiden,—
"for my sake, pardon him, and speak him free."

Dagobert shook his head, as unwilling to grant her petition; and the dwarf again laughed in the same horrid manner as before.

"Nay, sire," said the gentle girl, "all unused as I am to supplicate you for favours, will you refuse me this; this, mayhap, the only one I shall ever ask of you?"

She sighed deeply as she spake, for the remembrance of the lost youth hung heavily upon her heart. The object of her solicitude kept his little, keen, coal-black eye fixed intently on her face, as she thus pleaded for mercy to be extended to him.

"Well! well!" said the monarch; "be it so. But, hark ye, fellow ——"

"I am free!" shouted the dwarf, bursting his bonds as

easily as though they were twined of sand ; " I am free ! I am free ! "

He was at the princess's feet before any one was able to prevent him.

" Thanks to thee, most royal maiden ! " he exclaimed. " Thanks ! thanks ! You shall never repent your intercession for the prince of the Gnome people, who dwell in the depths of the earth. Farewell for the present. We'll meet again. "

With these words he rose, and snatching from the neck of the fair Beatrix a massive golden chain, to which was affixed a miniature of her mother, he tumbled into the bucket like a mass of lead, and sunk, swift as lightning, into the depths of the earth.

" We'll meet again ! we'll meet again ! " floated upwards from the recesses of the cavern, in dying cadences, most sweet to hear. " We'll meet again ! Farewell ! "

Ere Dagobert and his courtiers had time to recover themselves, the bucket once more ascended without the aid of human hands. As it came to the surface, however, it was perceived to be full ; and, on reaching the light, the form of the daring youth who had descended some hour or two before was visible in it. But he seemed all unconscious of his condition ; for a deep sleep, or a trance, had taken possession of his faculties. He was lifted from the bucket, in which it was discovered that he had been most carefully fastened ; and he was then laid on the earth. The courtiers thronged around him ; Dagobert and his daughter bent over him, each actuated by far different feelings. On his neck he wore the chain which had been just reft from the princess by the Gnome King : the miniature was in his bosom. This Beatrix noticed ; but as it seemed wholly unperceived of her sire and the surrounding crowd, she said nothing about it.

" Let him be taken to my tent, " spake Dagobert, " and call my own leech to him. Daughter, will you look to his accommodation, while I take order about the troublesome business of this mine ? 'Tis a brave boy ! "

Beatrix gladly assented ; and the tranced youth was, accordingly, transferred to the tent of the monarch. The leech came : but he only shook his head and looked grave. The priest came : and he tried to remove the chain from the neck of the young man ; but his efforts were ineffectual. Right glad was the

princess to perceive that the only signs of life besides the fact of breathing which her patient manifested, were visible in the energetic resistance he made to the removal of this ornament. At the coming of night Dagobert returned to his tent; and Beatrix sought her own couch.

But the gentle Beatrix could not sleep; for her heart was now the home of a thousand tumultuous emotions, all unknown before to her innocence and youth. She loved: and the inanimate youth of the morning was the object of this her first idolatry. Thinking alone of the eventful occurrences of the day, she lay awake the night; speculating on the past; dreaming fondly of the future; "Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancies." As she thus communed with herself, she became aware of the presence of an unbidden guest in her chamber: beside her bed's head stood the Gnome King.

"Hail to thee, fairest of maidens!" said the tiny creature, now blazing with all the brilliants of the mineral world—he appeared in full regal panoply. "I come to render you my thanks for the salvation you accorded me this morning, and to offer you my services."

The princess knew not what to reply; she trembled all over like an aspen-tree in the breeze of evening.

"Listen to me!" pursued the royal dwarf, "I'll tell you my story. I am a king of the Gnome people, who dwell in the depths of the earth. In a dispute which I had with another of our sovereigns, he overcame me; and I was adjudged by the supreme power to be his vassal until such time as I should find an object which both men and spirits prize higher than gold, or silver, or precious stones. After a long search I was unsuccessful; and then I grew to hate men as much as I hated my enemy and master. That was the reason why I interrupted the working of your father's mine, which is in my kingdom. This morning I slept for an hour—a fatal thing for a Gnome, as, in consequence, he loses his supernatural power for a season; and that was the cause why Dagobert's minions succeeded in seizing on me. Your word was my restoration. I recovered again the strength I had lost when a gentle maiden interceded for me—such is our law. I now come to requite you for the favour. Ask what you will."

"Save the youth!" said the blushing Beatrix; "restore him to life, and I will bless you for ever!"

"It is even as I desired," spake the Gnome, in soliloquy with himself. Then addressing the princess, he said, "Maiden, it may not be, I grieve to say, unless ——"

"What!" interrupted the agitated Beatrix, who, until now, had not known the full extent of her love,— "what! say it!"

"Attend to my words," observed the dwarf, "and you shall learn."

She bowed her head in silent acquiescence.

"It may not be," proceeded he, "because it is not in my power to disenchant him. I cast a fearful curse on the first victim who fell into my hands. He is the one! No might on the earth, or under the earth, may relieve him, or remove that curse: no means exist but one,—and that—nay, why should I tell you, gentle maiden? Name something else that I may grant ye."

"Nay, tell me! tell me! an you love me! cried the princess, "oh, tell me, I implore you!"

"Well, then," said the dwarf, "in that state he is doomed to continue until some maiden who loves him shall prove that she loves him better than life itself, by offering herself up as a sacrifice for his restoration."

"I do!—I will!" exclaimed the maiden, blushing to the brow at her involuntary confession.

"Good," replied the Gnome King, "good. Just what I expected. Are you ready?"

She hesitated a moment to answer this grave question. There is a great difference between saying and doing even in the minds of the most resolute; and it always takes some time to carry a resolution, however fixed, into full effect. But it was only for a moment that the maiden hesitated.

"I am ready," she replied, "when you will."

"Good," said the Gnome King again. "Now, listen! It is a fact not known to you, nor to other mortals, that when two souls link themselves together in the sweet bonds of love, two flowers spring up on the earth, the symbols of their union. These we spirits of earth and air term 'soul-flowers;' and who-so possesses them possesses a transcendent power. I know where

be the flowers that have just budded into existence for you. Here they are."

He produced two little flowers ; they were like early violets or young snowdrops, which had just broken the bud. The maiden gazed on them with a feeling of delight she had never known before.

"Take you this one," pursued the royal Gnome ; "hold it to your bosom : and, if you love truly, before your heart hath beat seven times, it will be a heap of ashes !"

She did so. At the seventh stroke the flower became an impalpable white powder—pure vegetable ashes.

"Now," said the Gnome, "lay thee down on thy couch, and bide the issue of this business."

She laid herself down accordingly ; the dwarf took the ashes of the flowers ; he touched her eyelids ; she fell into a deep slumber ; and she dreamed a dream—a vision of the night.

In that dream she saw the Gnome King go to her father's tent, where lay the inanimate form of her lover. The good demon was now disguised as a physician : but she knew him through his disguise. The court doctor sat beside the youth's bed ; the Gnome, prince, and he began a consultation together. The court doctor rose and left the tent. The Gnome advanced to the prostrate youth—he placed the second flower on his bosom—in a few moments it became a little heap of ashes. With this ashes he touched the eyes of the patient ; and then he slid from the tent unperceived. In a few moments more the court doctor again entered ; the youth now yawned and rubbed his eyes, and then awaking, sat up in the bed.

"God be thanked !" exclaimed Beatrix, "he is safe ! he is well !"

A thick cloud interposed between her mind's eye and the scene which had just been passing before it : she then sunk into complete unconsciousness, and, lost to sense, she dreamed no more.

The renovated youth walked forth next morning at the dawning : he felt the breath of the close tent in which he lay oppressive ; and he wished to inhale the fresh air of the new-born day. He wandered unconsciously beyond the camp ; and

he reached, without being aware of its vicinity, the mouth of the mine-shaft where he had descended the preceding day.

"Well met, my young friend," said a voice in his ear, "well met."

He turned round ; and he saw an aged man before him.

"I have cured you," quoth the ancient : "I have restored you to life : I mean to give you a new life to boot. But you must do my bidding—you love the beautiful Beatrix ?"

Like a girl in her teens did the young man blush, neck, and cheek, and brow,

" ————— To hear
The one lov'd name."

"Good," continued the greybeard energetically, "good ! Now, look yonder !"

A thick cloud of dust covered the whole western horizon ; it drew rapidly near them ; they were soon close to its outskirts.

The old man blew a lusty breath ; the youth did not think he had such wind in him : that whiff dispersed the dust and laid open to view the interior of the cloud. A noble retinue of knights and nobles were the nucleus of that cloud.

"Come ! mount !" cried the old man to the youth, as two led horses, richly caparisoned, were reverentially paced before them by a train of gorgeously dressed grooms ; "mount, my Lord Duke, and let us to the court of King Dagobert."

The puzzled young man did as he was directed ; but the act was quite involuntary on his part. The cavalcade then formed afresh ; and they all set off at a round pace for the camp. Herald had gone before them to announce their coming : and ere they reached their destination the monarch rode forth to meet them.

"Son of my ancient friend," said Dagobert, embracing the youth, "you are welcome. How fares thy sire ?"

"The Duke of Suabia is well, most mighty sovereign," interposed the old man ; "he sends thee his greeting ; these missives will make known our errand, if your majesty have not already divined it."

The king received the letters, and read them ; then smiling in a friendly manner at the old man, and embracing the youth, they returned to the camp together.

We shall pass over the recognition of the youth by the beau-

tiful Beatrix, for which she had been prepared by the Gnome Prince, and also the love-passages which ensued between them. The deception practised on her sire, and the management of the demon, who, it should be said, had assumed the character of governor to the simulated prince, may be passed over likewise. But we may not pass over the pangs which the ingenuous youth experienced at being made the instrument of such deception. The courtship prospered; the day was fixed on which Beatrix and Bernard—such was his name—were to be wedded and made one. Up to that period Bernard had been rather a passive than an active agent in the proceeding; but now the natural honesty of his disposition triumphed over his apathy as well as his interest. He sought out Dagobert, and prayed an interview with him; which was graciously accorded.

“My Lord,” he spake, “I can be party to such deceit as is now practised on you no longer. ’Tis true I love your fair daughter, and would sacrifice my life in her service. But I am not the Duke of Suabia’s son—I am the son of poor parents in a far-off land. You remember the mine-shaft? you remember the youth who risked his life in the descent? I am he.”

Dagobert looked at the speaker, and he saw he spoke the truth. The veil was at once removed from his eyes, which had interposed between him and the reality. He wondered, and was sore amazed; but he made no answer.

“Fool!” shouted the Gnome King, who appeared at that moment,—“Fool! you have spoiled all! I would have made ye a match for the fairest princess in the world; but now take your reward!”

He stamped angrily with his little foot on the earth, and a deep wide chasm immediately opened, and swallowed up him and his entire retinue.

“Seize yon traitor!” exclaimed Dagobert, as his guards entered at his call,—“seize him!”

The hapless Bernard was led away in chains, almost repenting to have acted honestly.

At the dead hour of night a veiled maiden stood at the mouth of the mine. A storm raged in the heavens; the sky

was pitch dark; the face of Nature was fearfully convulsed. She sat down and wept; the wind blew aside her veil; the light of the mine-lamp which stood before her fell on her countenance. It was Beatrix!

"Yes," she said, "I will deliver him, or die! Prince of the Gnomes, appear!"

The words were scarcely uttered when the dwarf stood beside her. His looks were grim: he was evidently ill pleased.

"Prince!" she cried, falling on her knees before him, and taking his hand in hers. "Prince! friend! you have the power—you know my wish."

He averted his head as though undesirous to entertain her application.

"It may not be, maiden," at length he softly said; "it may not be."

"Oh, God in Heaven!" energetically exclaimed the princess, "will you, too, fail me in this hour of trial? At the dawn of the day his head falls: such is the inexorable determination of my father!—save him! save him!"

Her tears fell like a tiny torrent; one of them touched the hand of the dwarf: in a moment it changed to a priceless pearl.

"I have it!" he suddenly cried, in a voice of joy, which made the welkin resound,—"*I am free!*"

He raised the maiden, and, clasping her in his arms before she was aware of his intention, they instantly stood together in the centre of a great hall, in a most magnificent subterranean palace.

A form advanced towards them: the light flashed upon his face: it was her lover! The Gnome King joined their hands together.

"Be ye united for aye," he spake, "ye are worthy one another. You, fair maiden, have delivered me from vassalage: I am now free for ever!"

"But my father?" said Beatrix.

"But the king?" interposed Bernard, inquiringly.

"Take no tent of that," spake the dwarf; "I'll settle the whole affair. But now we must part. Adieu!"

A sudden darkness fell on the scene; the lovers were hidden

from each other's view : the Gnome King had disappeared : it seemed like the vision of a dream : all had vanished.

It boots not now to tell by what agency the youth was released from the hands of the executioners, still less how he obtained the consent of Dagobert to become his son-in-law. Suffice it to say, that the next morning, which was to have witnessed his death, shone auspiciously on his marriage ; and that he and his beloved Beatrix lived long and happily together.

The Gnome Prince never gave the miners any further trouble ; and during the dynasty of the Merovignian monarchs, the mine is said to have been a source of unfailing wealth to these sovereigns.

Pass we now to Patersberg, commonly called "The Cat," an ancient castle, whose ruins are directly opposite, on the other side of the Rhine.

THE CAT.—PATERSBERG.

Tradition is poor in all that relates to the ruins of Patersberg, better known as the Cat (Die Katz), from the title of its founders, the Counts of Katzenellenbogen. But as if to make amends for that poverty, history is rich in many circumstances connected with its ancient occupants. "Truth is strange—stranger than fiction," says one of our greatest writers ; and the history of the lord of this castle, in the fifteenth century, the last of his race, goes far to prove the accuracy of that axiom.

On the extinction of the noble stock of Arnheim, who held the imperial stewardship of this portion of the Rhine in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the equally ancient and equally noble family of Katzenellenbogen succeeded to that dignity, and to all its privileges and appurtenances. By prudence and good government they soon raised themselves to the position of sovereign princes ; and we find them accordingly, possessed of great power in the middle of the thirteenth century. It was about this period (A.D. 1245) that Count Diether, the

first of that name, built the strong castle of Rheinfels, over the town of St. Goar, for the purpose of more effectually exacting tolls from all vessels passing up or down the river. In the fourteenth century this family, which had in the intervening time branched out into two great divisions, was again united into one stock in the person of John, the third count of that name. He it was who raised the castle of New Katzenellenbogen, or Patersberg (A.D. 1393), with the double view of controlling his warlike neighbour, Kuno von Falkenstein, archbishop of Treves, who had recently erected Thurnberg, also called the *Mouse*, lower down on the same side of the river,* and of strengthening the power derived from the strong fort of Rheinfels, on the other side. In reference to the former of these views he is said, on its erection, to have observed,

“ My cousin Kuno has now a Cat to watch his Mouse : and soon to swallow it up if needs be.”

This prediction, however, was not verified ; for the Archbishop was as astute as warlike ; by his caution preventing the success of every attempt against his castle ; and by his conduct in the field defeating all his enemies. The last of the great and powerful counts of Katzenellenbogen, was Philip, son of the preceding, John the Third ; and it is of his history we are about to treat.

Count Philip of Katzenellenbogen was wise, discreet, brave, and bountiful : his friends loved him ; his enemies feared him ; and his neighbours respected his great power and ample resources. His immense wealth gave him the means of making almost every noble on the Rhine, from Basel to Bonn, in a greater or lesser degree his debtor ; and in the process of time a large portion of their lands, in the form of unredeemed pledges, came into his sole possession. Thus it was that he increased the already extensive property of his family ; but, as it subsequently appeared, to little purpose, for he left no heir or successor. In the enjoyment of immense power, incalculable wealth, a high reputation not alone for bravery and prudence as a soldier and a prince, but also for honour and integrity as a man, there were few of his age, notwithstanding, more unhappy

* Vide Thurnberg,—the Mouse. Welmich, &c.

in their domestic circumstances than he. As a husband, as a father, and as a master, none could have been more truly unfortunate all through his long and glorious public career ; though, taking all things into consideration, few could have merited less to be so.

Early in life he married Anna, the daughter of Count Ludwig, of Wurtemberg ; and by her he had two children, a son and a daughter. It was, however, a luckless union ;—there was no similarity of disposition—no congeniality of temper—no sympathy, in short, between them : the result was domestic bickerings and household broils, which became the scandal of their friends, the pleasure of their foes, and the ruin of their own peace and happiness. That there may have been much to blame on both sides, it is only just to suppose : but that the principal cause was the overbearing disposition of the countess has never been denied. She inherited all the obduracy of her mother, Henrietta, of Mömplegart ; and like her seemed wholly intent on subduing her spouse to her will, or breaking his heart. A bad wife, a bad mother, and a bad mistress to her menials, she had the love of none, and the hatred of many. Time, which generally mellows the harsher traits of the human character, seemed to have no such effect upon her : on the contrary, each succeeding year but rendered them more salient and more repulsive. Such a state of things was not to be longer endured. The patient husband now became the inexorable judge ; and, compelling a formal separation on his part, gave her as dower the strong castle of Lichtenburg, in the Odenwald, on condition of residence there during the remainder of her life, or his pleasure : her children he retained at his court. But even there her unquiet spirit discovered means to disturb his repose ; she was perpetually at feud with her neighbours, and disgraceful broils with the domestics of her household were of every day occurrence. Nay, even the warden of the castle came in for a touch of her tyrannical temper ; though, as the representative of her husband, he was entirely exempt from her power. The consequence was, that complaints from all quarters poured in on the hapless Philip ; and he found himself ultimately obliged to take formal cognizance of the affair between his wicked wife and his officer. The latter charged the countess with a design to

destroy every thing, the property of his lord the count, confided to his care ; he also charged her with obstructing him in the discharge of his duties in various ways. She, in reply to these accusations, most characteristically counter-charged him with being the primary cause of them all ; inasmuch as he had, she said, incited the chief butler of the castle to induce her to learn the black art, by means of the assistance of the devil to recover again the lost affections of her husband. The matter was referred for decision to a friendly tribunal, composed of the Count of Isenburg, the Baron of Wallbrun, and her own son ; and they charitably concluded that it was love for her spouse alone that led to these disturbances on her part. They, therefore, counselled the count to take her back once more to his bosom, and give her another and a final trial. But nothing could shake the resolution which Philip had formed never to live with her again. In vain did the arbitrators urge it on him as a matter of right and duty ; in vain did his son plead with all the eloquence of filial affection for his lost mother ; he was not to be moved from his purpose. To prove to them, however, that he was not insensible to their efforts in her favour, he consented to make any arrangement they should suggest in amelioration of her condition ; and even imposed on himself the voluntary penalty of an occasional visit to her. But this would not satisfy the countess :—like most persons of her temperament she saw no fault in her own conduct, and she consequently looked on herself rather as a persecuted being, than as one who, in reality, merited much severer treatment than that she received. The result may be anticipated. Again was the mind of the count, her spouse, agitated by renewed complaints of her unendurable conduct—her tyrannical deportment—her capriciousness—nay, even her cruelty to every one within the sphere of her influence : again were charges against her poured in upon him unceasingly. He was nearly driven mad by her proceedings ; and he found it was futile for him to attempt to check or control them. Emboldened by success, she finally attempted to set his children against him ; and she might, perhaps, have succeeded in this unnatural design if her plan had not been discovered by accident. The last step was the one beyond which there could be no further forbearance on the part of

a husband: he restricted her power at once; made her all but a close prisoner in the castle of Lichtenburg, her residence; surrounded her with his own tried and faithful servants; and applied without delay to the court of Rome for a divorce. The pope, Calixtus the Third, either to enhance the value of the gift, or, perhaps, actuated by some conscientious scruple, named the Archbishop of Mainz, as a spiritual commission, to inquire into the accuracy of the allegations against her, and to report to him on the case before he consented to grant it. The examination was accordingly made; and the report was coincident with the count's statements: a divorce was shortly after pronounced by the holy father; and Philip and Anna were separated for ever. Ulrich, of Würtemberg, her brother, received her with all the pomp and state due to her station as his sister; and assigned her the stately castle of Weiblingen, on the Neckar, not far from Stuttgardt, with all the rich domains thereunto belonging, for her maintenance and support. But her evil disposition, even there, permitted her no peace: and she died, shortly after, in the meridian of life, a victim to a fit of insane rage and uncontrollable passion.

Philip was now happy. His son had espoused, with his consent, Ottilia, daughter of the Count of Nassau Dillenburg, who, besides a large portion, had also brought him a title to the reversion of valuable possessions in the Netherlands: and his daughter Anna had married Henry, the fourth landgraf of Hesse, a prince of the empire, and the head of one of the oldest families in Germany. But his happiness was only transitory; in this, as in every thing else, he was again the sport of fortune. His son was slain at Bruges, in Flanders (A.D. 1454), defending the lordship of Viamen against his uncle-in-law, John of Nassau; and he had no longer any prospect of continuing his family in the direct male line, as the only issue of the deceased was a daughter. A ray of hope, however, was afforded him by the ambition of Frederic, prince palatine of the middle Rhine. That calculating sovereign, anxious to annex the county of Ellenbogen to his electoral estates, proposed a marriage between Philip's granddaughter Ottilia, so named after her mother, and his nephew and heir, the electoral prince Ludwig, a youth of

great promise. But it was soon overcast ; in this, as in every thing else, some perverse power seeming to take a pleasure in thwarting his views. On the proposition being made to Ludwig by his uncle, the prince palatine, in a plenary court convened for the occasion, the youth briefly and coldly replied, "that he would never consent to a union in which his heart had no part ; and that he, moreover, considered himself sufficiently old to choose for himself in such a weighty matter as marriage." Frederic was as much surprised as annoyed at this resolution ; and it is said that Philip fell sick with mortification and disappointment when it was communicated to him. Shortly after he married Ottilia to the Markgraf Christoph of Baden ; but even this marriage, though it presented every outward appearance of prosperity, and seemed as desirable a union as could be wished for, became a fertile source of unhappiness to him, arising from the discord and disunion which it introduced among his heirs and probable successors.

In his latter years, however, although his granddaughter gave him a male child to succeed to his title and estates, he took it into his head to marry again ; and he espoused, accordingly, Anna, the young and beautiful widow of Otto, duke of Brunswick, in her own right a countess of the noble house of Nassau. She was an excellent woman ; one, indeed, in every way worthy of his choice. Mild in manner, kind of heart, loveable, and loving, her whole soul seemed devoted to her husband, and all her efforts directed to one end—that of making the remainder of his life happy. And happy it would have been if fate had not fore-ordained it otherwise. His marriage gave great offence to all those of his relations who had hopes of inheriting his vast possessions at his death ; and his latter days were fearfully embittered by their machinations against the life, as well as the fame, of his beautiful bride. The chief agent in those diabolical plots was a priest ; and he pursued them with an earnestness and a zeal which highly recommended him to his villanous employers.

Philip, at this period, dwelt in his strong castle of Rheinfels, on the opposite side of the river ; and there also he kept his court. Among the number of those dependent on his bounty, was a priest, Johann von Bornich, the wretch already alluded to. This

miscreant, whose sacred garb served as an almost impenetrable veil to screen his iniquities, had long given himself up in secret to the composition of poisons—an art then recently introduced into the north of Europe from Italy, and some time subsequently practised to such an awful extent in France, by the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, of infamous celebrity ;—and, as it was afterwards ascertained, to their administration to many hapless individuals, among other modes, by means of the host given at communion in the Catholic church. The wicked gravitate towards each other by a kind of instinct : therefore it is not at all surprising that the needy, unscrupulous expectants of Count Philip's possessions should have soon discovered a fitting instrument for their bad purposes in the castle chaplain—for such was his office. They saw him ;—developed their views ;—and promised him a portion of their gains, if he would assist them to poison the young countess, who, it was said, was then pregnant. Besides this promise, they gave him a large sum of money in hand. He at once fell in with their project ; and undertook to execute the infamous task without delay. The place selected for this meditated double murder was—the house of God, the castle chapel : the time,—the hour when service was celebrating in honour of the Omniscient. It was a custom of the period, or the family, or perhaps of the countess herself, that, when she went to hear mass in the chapel of the castle, a cup of wine was consecrated for her sole use by the chaplain, and set apart on the altar until she should partake of it. In this cup, or, more properly speaking, chalice, the fiendish Bornich mixed up his most active poison on the destined morning, before her arrival at the altar. The mass was said and over ; the communion only remained to be administered. The demon in holy orders took the poisoned cup from the altar of the living God, and presented it to the unconscious countess as she knelt in pious humility at its foot. She raised it to her lips ;—the villain's dark countenance was lighted up with a look of exultation :—but it was again momentarily overcast as she hesitated to swallow its contents. An unusual fermentation seemed astir in the liquor, and a suspicious strange-looking substance floated on its surface. She pointed it out to the poisoner ; but he, with an

unmoved aspect, persuaded her that it was only dust from the ceiling of the chapel. She believed him, and drank off the deadly draught to the last drop. In a few minutes after she had reached her chamber the poison began to operate. She did not, however, die ; but her life was long despaired of. The villain, who had administered the poison, fled to avoid the punishment due to his crime, as well as to receive the reward of his perfidy.

The sorrow and exasperation of Philip, the unfortunate husband, were inexpressible ; such an effect had this awful occurrence on his health, that his own life was considered for some time in danger. But, notwithstanding all—notwithstanding his age, his illness of body and mind, and the almost certainty of death if he persevered—day and night he watched beside the bed of his beloved wife, and never for a single moment quitted it, until the physicians had pronounced her out of immediate danger. He then betook him to his own sick-couch ; and only recovered with great care, and after a painful and protracted fit of illness. In the meanwhile the father of the countess, the noble William of Nassau, left nothing undone to discover the fugitive assassin, and to bring all concerned in this dreadful deed to condign punishment ; and his efforts were ultimately successful, though repeatedly defeated by the interested interference of the villain's employers. By the time that Philip was declared convalescent, the assassin was arrested at Cologne ; and shortly after brought to solemn trial in that city before the archbishop in person. Philip and Anna were present, at well as an immense concourse of knights and nobles from all parts of Germany. The wretch was convicted on the clearest evidence. He offered no defence ; and expressed no penitential feeling : on the contrary, he seemed to glory in his crime ; and to regret only that it had not been fully accomplished. To illustrate the influence which vice may sometimes exercise over the human heart, it will suffice to say that this wretched murderer not only freely acknowledged his misdeeds, but absolutely made, in a boasting manner, disclosures which shocked the most experienced in criminal judicature. From his own confession, it would appear that he had given death to numbers ;—principally for the purpose of ascertaining the strength, and making himself acquainted with the operation, of his deadly potions : and that his

favourite mode of administering the poison was in the sacrament of communion, mixed up with the materials of the host, or consecrated wafer, taken by communicants. He was condemned to be hanged and burned, by the unanimous voice of his judges, amidst the exclamations of the entire population of that crowded city. His execution took place in the great square, now known as the Hay-Market. The awful ceremony was most imposing. He was drawn to the gallows—an unusually high one—on a hurdle, dressed in his clerical robes. When the vehicle arrived at the foot of this fatal structure he was made to stand upon a scaffold, raised considerably above the mass of men who thronged the extensive area of the place of execution. There, pinioned and blindfolded, his clerical garb was forcibly torn from his back by two canons of the cathedral; and he was then delivered over by them to the hands of the common hangman and his assistant executioners. His guilty soul soon passed into the presence of his offended God, amidst the cheers and execrations of tens of thousands of human beings. He died as he had lived, a hardened wretch—an unrepentant villain—a blasphemer of every thing high and holy.

The countess again recovered her health and strength, owing to her youth and unimpaired constitution. But the object of the murderer's wicked employers was, however, attained: she had miscarried during her illness; and the poison was of sufficient power to destroy the principle of all future fecundity in her system. Though she lived long, she bore children no more: and thus the fond hopes of her affectionate husband were for ever annihilated. This circumstance, however, did not affect his love for her: nay, he seemed to love her more and more every day they lived together. All hopes of direct issue being at an end, he selected the husband of his granddaughter, the brave and accomplished Henry, landgraf of Hesse, as his heir: and, thus freed from the importunities of needy heirs, and the machinations of wicked expectants, he finished his long and troubled life in peace and honour.

On his demise, the large possessions of the Counts of Katzenellenbogen, together with all the titles, and dignities, and honours, appertaining to that ancient and noble family, fell to the house of Hesse, in which they still continue.

RHEINFELS, ST GOAR.

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We recross the river for the purpose of reaching Rheinfels and St. Goar, which lie on the other shore.

RHEINFELS. — ST. GOAR.

Rheinfels, which impends directly over the town of St. Goar, though now but the fragment of a ruin, was once the Gibraltar of the Rhine. The fate of this fortress has been somewhat singular. Originally a monastery, in connexion with the worship of St. Goar, it was subsequently converted into a Raub-Nest; then it became a legitimate stronghold of power; and, finally, fell into wreck and ruin. So strong were its natural and artificial defences at the time it was a den of titled thieves, that the combined forces of six-and-twenty Rhenish towns and cities besieged it in vain for sixty-six weeks, in the years 1335 and 1336. This siege was the first act of the famous Confederation of the Rhine, in the middle ages, which eventuated in the free trade of that river, the extirpation of the hordes of robbers who infested its shores, and the destruction of almost every one of their castles. It originated in an enormous impost attempted to be levied on wine by the Count of Katzenellenbogen, then possessor of the fortress of Rheinfels; and it included among the Confederates the Archbishops of Mainz, Treves, and Cologne, the Wild- and-Rheingravs of the Hunsrück, the Pfalzgraf of the Rhine, and the cities of Oberwesel, Boppard, Wetzlar, and Andernach.

Rheinfels was, subsequently, the scene of the attempted tragedy narrated in the preceding pages.*

In the war on the Rhine, which took place during the reign of Louis the Fourteenth of France, this castle suffered so severely that it was never after considered in the same light, as a place of strength, as it had been before. On that occasion it made a brave defence; and Colonel Gorz, its commander, offered a powerful resistance to the troops who invested it under Marshal Tallard.

* Patersberg, &c.

In 1794, Rheinfels surrendered, almost without a shot fired, to the French army of the Rhine, of the first Revolution. By them it was blown up; and the fortifications dismantled, and reduced to the state in which they now stand.

Below Rheinfels lies the town of St. Goar, famous since the period when Christianity was first propagated on the Rhine.

The name of this town is variously derived by antiquarians. Some deduce it from the sand-bank (Sand Gewirr) which stands adjacent to it on the Rhine: others, on the contrary, derive it from the pious hermit, St. Goar, who is stated to have made this spot his abode in the time of the Merovignian monarchs of Austrasia. It is the latter hypothesis, as the most popular, and the least adverse to the tenour of this work, that shall be adopted in these pages. It runs thus—"legend, tradition, and history."

In the middle of the sixth century (A.D. 575), when Siegbert, the son of Clotaire, ruled over that portion of the west of Europe, known by the name of Austrasia, the Rhine inclusive, a pious hermit, since revered as St. Goar, came to settle among the semi-barbarous people who then dwelt on the shores of that river. He came among them as a kind of apostle, for the purpose of instructing them in the Christian faith; also with the view of improving their physical condition, which was then very destitute; and he took up his abode in a little cell, still shewn to the curious, close by the town. There from morn till night was he employed in prayer and preaching to the rugged dwellers around him: in efforts to make their homes more comfortable, and in works of mercy to the sick and the afflicted. In the night he watched the course of the current, and was ever ready to afford assistance to any stranded bark which the strong eddy under that point, known as the Sand Gewirr, rendered but too often necessary in those days of ignorance and unskilfulness in navigation. Thus passed his humble, but useful and happy life.

The fame of his sanctity soon spread itself abroad; for he was already revered as a saint by those whom he had converted to the true faith, and as something superhuman by those whom he had saved from the perils of shipwreck and the dangers of the river. It soon reached the ears of Siegbert, who then kept court at Andernach; and he invited the pious hermit to his palace. Goar proceeded

thither accordingly ; and the monarch was so much edified with his holiness that he at once offered him the archbishoprick of Treves. His stainless life created him many enemies among the corrupt ecclesiastics of the Austrasian court ; but by none was he more bitterly hated than by the Archbishop of Treves. Siegbert, however, would listen to nothing against him ; and at length, to put an end to this persecution of the pious man, he dispossessed the malignant prelate, and placed the see in the hands of the poor hermit. But Goar was too little attached to the pomp and vanities of the flesh, and too much to his flock of poor fishermen ; he declined the dignity ; and then departed from Andernach. Before he left the court of Siegbert, to prove to the king that his mission was from God alone, and that in refusing the high ecclesiastical functions which had been offered him, he only obeyed the impulse of the Holy Spirit ; he is said to have thrown his thread-bare cloak across a sunbeam in the great hall of the palace—and, more wondrous still, it is related that it hung there as on a peg.

He lived long among his worshipping flock, and died in the fulness of years, a model of piety (A.D. 575). Siegbert ordered a chapel to be erected over the spot where he was buried ; and appointed two priests to officiate there from among the holy man's disciples.

In the process of time this chapel was surrounded by a series of cells inhabited by anchorites, who adopted Goar as their patron saint ; and, ultimately, these recluses were all gathered together in a proud monastery, built on the site of those humble dwellings. The grave of the hermit became a celebrated place of pilgrimage within a century from his death ; and it so continued to be during the middle ages. But the brightest gem in the coronal of glory won by St. Goar, was his appointment in after-times to the patronship of hospitality. By the rule of the monastery, free quarters were afforded in it to all strangers for a certain number of days ; and every town which sprung up in the vicinity vied with this religious foundation in the practice of that delightful virtue ; such is ever the influence of good example.

It is, however, related in the ancient chronicles of the Frankish kings, that this virtue was not always exercised to the full extent

of the rule by the monks : and we have an account in verse of a severe corporal punishment inflicted on the prior of the monastery by Pepin the Little, first of the Carlovignian kings of the Franks, for omitting to entertain his queen, Bertrada, on the occasion of a pilgrimage made by her to the grave of St. Goar, A. D. 760.

Though in his lifetime none could be more humble of mind than the pious hermit, the object of all this posthumous reverence, it appears, however, from tradition that he was rather more jealous of his honour after his canonization. Various tales are related of the disasters which occurred to those who, in passing the place where his remains rested, either neglected or forgot to visit his shrine, and deposit their offerings there : but to characterise the degree of credit to which they are entitled, it will suffice to say that they have been all drawn from the archives of the monastery. One is told of Charlemagne, which, though of no particular interest in a legendary point of view, may not be altogether unacceptable in so far as it is connected with that celebrated sovereign.

He was once on his way from Ingelheim to Coblentz, saith the legend, with the intention of journeying further to Aix-la-Chapelle, his favourite residence. It was high summer,—and a summer of extraordinary beauty it was. Indeed such a day as that on which he took boat with his court to drop down the Rhine never came out of the heavens. To look on the bright sun and the blue sky ;—to see the hills and the valleys basking in the brilliant light of heaven ;—to behold the broad river bounding between its green banks, like an unbroken colt in a rich meadow, full of splendour, and strength, and loveliness, one would almost imagine that there was never such a thing as darkness ; and that night, and gloom, and tempest, and storm, were but names to frighten children,—mere bugbears of the imagination. It was a gay sight, and a gallant, too, to see all the knights and nobles of that court—then the centre of all chivalry—and the glorious looks of the ladies—the flower of every European land—as they embarked on the bosom of old Father Rhine : but, oh ! how much more gay and glorious to see that argosy of valour and beauty float down his placid waters, and to hear the willing shores echo with the music of a hundred lutes, and the sweet voices of twice a hundred happy

hearts, raised in praise of his greatness and his beneficence. Swiftly shot they past the several towns which studded both banks of the river ; and, among others, past St. Goar. No one thought of the holy man ; no one deemed of the sacred spot ; far other thoughts than those of religion and penitence occupied their minds ; their souls were filled with the pleasures of the world.

“ Hurrah ! ” shouted a losel, in the bow of the imperial barque ; “ how merrily dance we o’er the blue waters.”

“ Another hour and we are at Boppard,” cried a second.

“ And to-night in fair Coblenz,” interposed a third, “ shall we not drink deep of the Moselle wine, and gaily kiss the Moselle maidens ? ”

A loud laugh followed this sally of licentious wit ; but the mirth it excited was only of short duration. All of a sudden the sky darkened ; the thunder growled ; the lightning flashed ; and the river rose like a giant from his slumber. In a moment it was pitch-dark ; the passengers could not see one another’s faces, though it was little past mid-day. All was consternation and dismay in that gay flotilla.

“ Put ashore, put ashore,” shouted the emperor.

“ Put ashore, put ashore,” resounded from every barque in the fleet.

But it was easier said than done. Make what effort they might, the mariners could not move a single vessel. In vain they toiled at their oars ; in vain they exerted their strength ; in vain they expended their energies ; in vain did the courtiers, nay, even the monarch himself, lend them assistance ; not an inch could they be made to stir ; there they seemed, as it were, fixed, rooted, while the raging waters boiled and foamed up around them like the contents of a hideous caldron prepared to engulf them all in its gaping entrails. It was then outspoke a gray-bearded boatman, who had known the moods of the Rhine for full fifty years :—

“ It may not be, oh Kaiser ! ”* thus he spake. “ Further we cannot proceed ; we have offended God and St. Goar.”

* Emperor.

The monarch felt the force of this observation ; but he said nothing. Not so, however, his affrighted train.

“ A miracle ! a miracle ! ” they cried in deep dismay. “ We have offended God and St. Goar.”

Many were the vows made that day to the saint.

“ Put ashore,” said the emperor, “ in the name of God and St. Goar. We go on no further this day, fair or foul ; but at the shrine of that holy hermit shall we pray his intercession with Heaven for peace and forgiveness.”

In another instant the dense darkness was dissipated ; the thick clouds were rolled up as though they were a slight screen ; the sun shone out, if possible, more beautiful than before ; and the face of the foaming river became like a polished mirror, so still, so smooth, did its bright waters flow onward in their course. The flotilla put in for the shore, and landed without difficulty. The remainder of the day was spent in prayer and penitence ; the next morning they embarked “ better and wiser ” for their tribulation ; and in due time they reached their destination.

Before, however, Charlemagne departed from the sacred shrine, he bestowed on it a rich largess, which was much increased by the imitative donations of his court. He also endowed the monastery with many broad lands, and conferred high privileges upon it ; which, concludes the legend, redounded much to his honour and glory in this life, and secured him eternal happiness in the next.

It appears that the saint was not ungrateful for the monarch's gifts ; for we find his grave, some time before Charlemagne's death, the scene of a most touching interview, ending in a tender reconciliation, between his rival sons, Pepin and Carloman, who then disputed with each other respecting the sovereignty of his immense empire. A German lady,* whose genius does honour to her sex and nation, has turned the tale into sweet verse, and embalmed it with the very essence of poetry. The following is a free translation of her production :—

* Adelheid von Stolterfoth. “ Rheinischer Sagen-Kreis : ” more than once alluded to in this work.

ST. GOAR'S GRAVE—PEPIN AND KARL.

Close by the syren Lurley's rocky throne,
Ages a-gone, the holy Goar dwelt.
With his own hands deep in the mountain-stone
Daily his grave he dug as there he knelt.
Wide o'er the land the word of truth he spread :
Rude heathens heard and humbly worshipped.

But not to these were all his cares confined :
Full many a foundering barque he brought to shore,
And travellers lost, to dreary death consigned,
The thickets through, the rough paths past, he bore ;
And wearied wanderers gave to eat and rest ;
And cheered the fainting, and the dying blest.

Which made, that when united to his God,
From every part throng'd crowds of pilgrims there :
The sad of heart his lowly chapel trod,
The sinner, too, for pardon did repair,—
And eke the sick and sore,—and each departed
From thence, if not all healed, yet lighter-hearted.

As time sped on his fame grew more divine,
 So that the king and beggar might be seen
 At the same moment kneeling to his shrine,
 Praying his aid—a pleasant sight I ween.
 Rose a rich pile, as gifts poured in a-main,
 Which, sooth to say, the monks paid back again

In hospitality. Once, ages ago,
 When ruled the German realm old Charlemagne,
 It happ'd that 'tween his elder sons did flow
 A stream of hate—wherefore's not said or sang—
 But they were foes—such foes as brothers be
 When they fall out—'twas terrible to see !

Pepin, a valiant prince, long time had dwelt,
 And fought, and conquered in fair Italy ;
 While to his brother Karloman had knelt
 The pride, and power, and worth of Germany.
 Both now are on their way to Thionville,
 Where their great sire divide his empire will.*

One path alone led unto his abode,
 That was the Rhine,—the grand, the glorious Rhine :—
 Each with a well-armed train now took this road.
 Pepin was first ; and as he near'd the shrine
 Of good St. Goar, “ Here,” he said, “ I'll pray ;—
 'Twas here my brother last in these arms lay.

'Twas here we parted last, and here I'll kneel.
 Why is it we are now such mortal foes ;
 Yet Ludwig friend to both ?”—'Twas thus did feel
 And think the prince, ere from that shrine he rose ;
 Then he with softened heart stood up, and eye
 Filled to the brim with tearful agony.

* A. D. 806, Charlemagne held an Imperial Diet at Thionville, or Dielenhofen, as it was then called, and there partitioned his immense empire, by testament, between his three sons, Karloman, Pepin, and Ludwig. They were made co-regents of their respective portions during his lifetime.

Meanwhile approached the train of Karl the spot :
An hour full before had sped their lord ;
And as he neared the scene he sudden caught
The reflex of his brother's glancing horde.
He springs ashore—he hies him through the wood,
He, too, would kneel unto St. Goar good.

He, too, is touched with tenderness—and lo !
Unto the blessed shrine is humbly boune
To pray and be at peace. That none may know
The penitent, his vizor draws he down.
The chapel 's reach'd—the portal 's pass'd—he sees—
Protect us, Heaven !—his brother on his knees.

He scarcely breathes ;—he dares not stir. Behind
A massive pillar hides he him in haste.
Oh God ! Who may imagine in his mind,
As Pepin's prayer fell on his ear, what pass'd ?
Who deem the happiness his soul that swell'd,
As though the choir like heavenly rills it well'd ?

“ I ask not greatness, Lord ; I pray not power ;
Be wealth and glory far from me apart,”—
’Twas thus he prayed,—“ but give me in this hour—
This hour of peace and penitence—his heart !
Grant that once more we friends, as brothers, be,
Then take my life—’tis thine—oh ! joyfully.”

Hark ! o'er the pavement clangs a warrior's tread ;
Lo ! an arm'd knight the kneeling prince embraces.
Through his closed vizor, hot and fast is shed
A shower of tears ; it bathed both their faces.
“ Who art thou ? ”—“ Brother, canst thou me forgive ?
’Tis thine this heart—my all—why should I live ? ”

Pepin looks up into the stranger's eye ;
With hasty hand his vizor sets aside.
Oh happy he ! why did he not then die ?
He has his prayer. O'erborne with joy and pride,

“ 'Tis he !—'tis Karl !” he cries,—he may no more—
For, like a corpse, he falls upon the floor.

* * * *

And now both brothers, erst such bitter foes,
Link'd arm in arm, slow leave the sacred shrine,
And joyful pace to where their hosts repose
Upon thy banks, oh bright and beauteous Rhine !
Loud shouts soon greet them ; all cry “ miracle !”
What gifts St. Goar got, I may not tell.

Thenceforward nought these brothers might dis sever.
In brief space bless'd them too their father fond ;
In joy and sorrow link'd they seemed for ever ;
But ah ! their early deaths dissolv'd the bond ;
Soon follow'd they each other to the grave,*
And their great sire wept those he could not save.

Ludwig the Pious, the survivor of his brothers, and inheritor of the empire of his father, largely endowed the rising monastery of St. Goar. Among other valuable gifts which he presented to it, was a wood which then lay between Oberwesel and Bacharach, but of which all traces have since disappeared. His successors likewise, when not engaged in intestine war, were great benefactors to it ; so that in process of time it became extremely wealthy. It is related, that the wealth of the monastery having attracted the cupidity of a neighbouring baron, Werner von Boland, he resolved, in the true spirit of the period,—the latter end of the eleventh century, “ the pure age of chivalry,”—to attack and plunder it. Accordingly, gathering together his retainers, he surrounded the abode of the peaceful brethren, who, all unconscious of evil, were very ill prepared to repel such a powerful invader. But, as old legends relate, he

* Karloman, the eldest son of Charlemagne, died in the year of God 810, and Pepin, the second son of that monarch, in 811. Their great sire himself terminated his long and glorious career at Aix-la-Chapelle, where he is buried, about three years later, A.D. 814. Ludwig, his youngest and only surviving son, succeeded him. The feud between the brothers is a historical fact.

was repulsed in a manner entirely unexpected; and had to endure the disgrace of a defeat from those whom he most despised.

The monastery was surrounded; the monks were in despair; a battering-ram was directed against the great gate of the edifice; and the massive portals began to give way; when it occurred to the abbot to exhibit a crucifix to the fierce assailants, as a last resource, in this his dire extremity. The sacred symbol was accordingly shewn at the principal window, by the abbot in person, assisted by all the monks then in the monastery. It was hoped that this appeal to the religious feelings of the beleaguering host would turn them from their purpose; or, at least, that it would procure a temporary cessation of hostilities, during which time assistance might reach the besieged. But this hope was soon discovered to be a vain one, raised on a most unsubstantial foundation; for the ruffians engaged in the assault, immediately that they saw the cross held forth, shot a cloud of arrows at it, one of which transfixed the image of the Saviour on the right side. Now for the miracle. "The wound," says the chronicler,* with an impressiveness which fully satisfies the reader as to his implicit belief in the circumstance,—“the wound was no sooner inflicted on the holy figure, than (wonderful to relate!) the blood flowed forth in a pure, clear stream, to the consternation and utter dismay of the marauders.”

“A miracle! a miracle!” resounded from mouth to mouth; and all further attack on the monastery was at once suspended. That night the main force dispersed in different directions;—some seeking their homes, some setting out on pilgrimages to various places, and some seeking relief from the pangs of conscience in the commission of suicide. Werner von Boland, the leader of this lawless band, immediately afterwards took up the cross; abjured his home, and rank, and ample possessions; and, finally, perished, a crusader, on the burning plains of Palestine.

The feast-day of St. Goar fell on the sixth of July; and in former times it was always observed with great pomp and cir-

* Wandelbert. “De Goaris Mirac.” The author was a monk in the monastery of Prüm.

cumstance. The celebration of this day is of very ancient date; for mention is made of it in a Calendar of the Diocese of Treves, or Triers, in the early part of the tenth century.

The countless crowds of pilgrims that frequented the shrine of St. Goar, from the tenth to the twelfth century, caused, of course, a great influx of riches to the monks who had the care of it; and riches produced with them the usual consequences—magnificent buildings, luxury of living and equipages, crowds of retainers, and all the host of *et ceteras* common to wealth and power at that period. To their credit, however, be it said, that with the extension of their means, they also extended their hospitality; and made the monastery of their order become the paradise of pilgrims to the sacred spot; and of all wayfarers on the road and on the river. The immense wealth of this establishment attracted the attention of a band of unscrupulous robbers, who infested the Rhine in the middle of the twelfth century; and, accordingly, we find that it was again sacked and burned by these infamous villains, in the year 1136. But though its accumulations of wealth were destroyed, the source of them was unimpaired. In a very few years the monastery again arose from its ashes; and once more became the abode of a legion of monks, and the resting-place of thousands of pilgrims. The Counts of Arnheim, as the stewards of the district for the Kings of the Franks, became also the protectors of the shrine; and, the better to ensure its future safety, they surrounded the monastery, the church, and the houses in their vicinity, with strong walls, and conferred on the lay inhabitants certain privileges, for the purpose of enabling them to defend themselves from attack. This was the origin of the present town of St. Goar.

A curious old custom, connected with the rites of hospitality formerly practised there, long survived the dissolution of the monastery. It was called Hänseln; and was said to be derived from an ancient observance of the monks, imposed on them by a grant of Charlemagne; who, they state, left an annual income of twenty marks to the monastery, for the sole entertainment of strangers with Rhenish wine. It was as follows:—When a traveller entered St. Goar for the first time, and claimed hospitality at the hands of any of the residents, he was desired to

select a sponsor; this done, he was taken to the toll-house, where a silver collar, alleged to be the gift of the mighty monarch, was placed round his neck; he was then told that it was necessary he should be baptized, and he was asked in what liquid he would prefer to have the ceremony performed,—whether in wine or in water? If he chose wine, a large golden beaker of the generous fluid—generally the best Muscatel—was filled for him; and this he was obliged to empty thrice, to the healths of the emperor, the lord of the soil, and the Society of Good Fellows, who performed the rite—formerly it was to the brotherhood of the monastery. He then put a donation, little or great, according to his means, into the poor-box. This done, a gilt crown was placed on his head; and the bacchanalian laws were recited to him with mock solemnity. He was finally installed a member of the society, and informed that he had the privilege from thenceforward of fishing on the summit of the Lurley-berg (where there is not a drop of water), and hunting on the adjacent sand-bank in the Rhine (where there is not dry footing) for ever and ever. This installation, being the recitation of these rights and privileges, was always made in ludicrous verse, *spott-rhein*, as the Germans term it. Here are the two most pertinent of the long string of stanzas run through on those occasions:—

“ On the sand-bank of St. Goar, over which the vexed Rhine rushes,
Where the boatman is a-feared lest his barque fall in the flushes,
The right to hunt and shoot is hereby to thee conceded—
To kill all the game you meet—and no more permission’s needed.

And on Lurley rock likewise, all that fishery so famous,
To catch salmon, crabs, and trout; in short, all kinds you can name us,
To have, and eke to hold, for twice a mile around our border:—
And now you know the rights of this our most noble order.”

This singular ceremony was concluded by the stranger thus inaugurated inscribing his name, the date of the month and year, and any other circumstances he thought proper, in the register of the society, denominated the *Hänsel* Book, which was filled with a crowd of names in the language and character of almost every nation in Europe. But wo to the unhappy wight who preferred baptism in water to baptism in wine. He was told

for his pains that he was but a blind heathen ; and to prove that he was so, a full bucket of the liquid of his choice was poured over his person, which generally soused him to the skin. No further notice was taken of him.

Such was the celebrity of this order, that the Landgraf George of Hesse, in the year 1627, issued a rescript, by which he not only affirmed all its ancient privileges, whether derived from the *lex scripta* or the *lex non scripta*, but also forbade the entertainment of all stranger merchants in the town, and especially interdicted their traffic with the inhabitants, unless they were previously admitted members of it.

Some writers ascribe this singular custom to the circumstance of the town of St. Goar having been one of the Hanse Towns' Confederacy ; and also derive its name from this connexion with that famous commercial league for the protection and furtherance of traffic.

Among the curiosities of the monastery, the monks of St. Goar shewed a huge butt, a present, as they termed it, from Charlemagne, which was gifted with the pleasant property of never standing empty. They also told this story in proof of its miraculous virtue.

One night, as the reverend butler of the monastery was drawing wine from it for the entertainment of some noble strangers who that day dined with the abbot, in the flurry of the moment, or perhaps oblivious through too free a use of its contents, he left the cellar, forgetting to turn the cock of the vessel. Next morning, according to his invariable custom, he paid a visit to this precious deposit, and, lo and behold ! he perceived the mistake he had committed, and also the miracle that had been wrought for its rectification. "A large spider," says the legend, "had so thickly woven his web across the aperture, that not a single drop of the wine escaped."

" The earth hath bubbles as the water has,
And this is of them."

TURNBERG, DIE MAUS.

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THURNBERG.—THE MOUSE.

Thurnberg, more commonly called the Mouse, is also known as Kunoburg, in consequence of its re-edification by Kuno von Falkenstein, archbishop of Mainz, Treves, and Cologne, more than once mentioned in these pages, about the middle of the thirteenth century.

Kuno von Falkenstein was one of the most powerful princes on the Rhine, and one of the most politic sovereigns. Sprung from a warlike stock, he did not, although a priest, belie his militant descent. His earliest delight was in passages of arms; and it is recorded that he performed many signal feats in the various combats which the unsettled circumstances of the period gave such frequent rise to. He always wore armour in preference to the robes of an ecclesiastic: and he was usually known by the appellation of Ritter, or Sir Kuno. On one occasion, while attending the court of the Emperor Charles the Fourth, at Mainz, that weak monarch cut a sorry joke upon his warlike accoutrements; but the warrior priest had sufficient good sense to let it pass over unheeded.

The first dignity which he attained was more of a temporal than of a spiritual character. He was elected steward or administrator of the archdiocese of Treves, during a contention for the electoral throne between two rival candidates. His administration was vigorous in the extreme; and he soon put an end to the many disorders which civil strife is always certain to engender in a small state. It was not, however, with impunity that he effected these salutary reforms in that diocese; for he was, on more than one occasion, placed in circumstances of considerable danger by his enemies. He was beset on every side, and twice or thrice narrowly escaped with his life. Once he was waylaid on the high-road by an ambush placed there purposely for his destruction, and only escaped the assassins through the fleetness of his steed; and on another occasion, he was compelled to spring from a window of the castle of Ehrenfels, which was unexpectedly surrounded by his foes, or he would have been taken by them in his bed.

But it is not intended to write his history here ; and, therefore, it will suffice to state that he lived long, and reigned gloriously for his own fame, as well as advantageously for his subjects' happiness ; and that he died about the latter end of the fourteenth century, A. D. 1388.

The following legend relates not to the structure raised by this prelate ; but to the more ancient one on whose ruins it was erected.

THE WHITE MAIDEN.

It is now centuries since a young noble of the neighbourhood was hunting in the valleys which lie behind the hills that skirt the Rhine opposite the ancient town of St. Goar. In the heat of the pursuit he followed his game to the foot of the acclivity on which are seated the ruins of Thurnberg ; there, however, it disappeared all at once from his view. It was the noon of a midsummer-day, and the sun shone powerfully down on him. Despairing of being able to find the object of his pursuit, he determined to clamber up the steep hill-side, and seek shelter and repose in the shadow of the old castle, or, mayhap, in one of its many crumbling chambers. With much labour he succeeded in reaching the summit ; and there, fatigued with his toil, and parched with a burning thirst, he flung himself on the ground, beneath one of the huge towers, some of whose remains still rear their heads on high, and stretched out his tired limbs in the full enjoyment of rest.

“ Now,” said he, as he wiped the perspiration from his sun-burnt brow,—“ now would I be happy indeed, if some kind being only brought me a beaker of the cool wine, which, they say, is ages old, down there in the cellars of this castle.”

No sooner said than done. He had scarce spoken the words when a most beautiful maiden stepped forth from a cleft in the ivy-covered ruin, bearing in one hand a huge silver beaker of an antique form, full to the very brim of foaming wine. In her other hand she held a large bunch of keys, of all sizes. She was garbed in white from head to heel ; her hair was flaxen ; her skin was like a lily ; and she had such loving eyes, that they at once won the heart of the young sportsman.

"Here," said she, handing him the beaker; "behold, thy wish is granted. Drink, and be satisfied."

His heart leaped within him for joy of her condescension; and he emptied the contents of the goblet at a single draught. All the while she looked on him in such a manner as to intoxicate his very soul; so kindly and so confidential were her glances. The wine coursed through his veins like liquid flame; and his heart soon burned with unholy love for the maiden. The fever of his blood was by no means appeased by the furtive looks which ever and anon she contrived to cast on him. She saw his state of mind—she could not fail, indeed, to see it;—and when his passion was at its highest pitch, and all restraint seemed at an end from the potent influence of love and wine, she disappeared in a moment, by the way she came, equally sudden and equally swiftly. He rushed after in the hopes of detaining the fugitive, or, at least, of catching a parting glimpse of her retreating form; but the ivy-enwreathed cleft through which she seemed to have flitted, looked as though it had not been disturbed for centuries; and as he tried to force his path to the gloomy depths below, a crowd of bats, and owls, and other foul birds of evil omen, aroused from their repose, rose upwards, and, amidst dismal hootings and fearful cries, almost flung him backwards with the violence of their flight. He spent all the remainder of that afternoon in the search of his lost one; but with not the slightest success. At the coming of night he wended his way homeward, weary, heart-sick, and overwhelmed with an indefinable sensation of sadness and woe.

From that day forth he was an altered man;—altered in appearance as well as in mind and in manners. Pleasure was a stranger to his soul; and he knew no longer what it was to enjoy peace. Wherever he went, whatever pursuit he was engaged in, whether in the chase, in the hall, in lady's bower, or at church, his eye only saw one object—the white maiden. At the festive board she stood in imagination always before him, offering to his fevered lips the cool, brimming beaker; and in the long-drawn aisles of the sacred edifice, she was ever present, beckoning him from his devotions to partake of the generous beverage which she still bore in her right hand. Every matron or maiden he met with in the castles of his friends and acquaint-

ances, seemed by some wondrous process to take her shape ; and even the very trees of the forest, when the excitement of the chase was at the highest, all looked to his thought as though they resembled her. Thenceforward

“ From morn till eve, from eve till dewy morn,”

did he haunt these ruins ; still hoping to see, once again, her for whom he felt that he was dying ; and living alone in that hope. The sun scorched him—but it was nothing to the heat that burned within him : the rain drenched him, but he cared not for it. Time, and change, and circumstance seemed all forgotten by him ; every thing passed him by unheeded. His whole existence was completely swallowed up in one thought—the white maiden of the ruined castle ; and that alas ! was only vanity and vexation of spirit. A deadly fever seized him. It was a mortal disease. Yet still he raved of nothing, even in his delirium, but of her. One morn a woodman, who occasionally provided him with food, found him a corpse at the entrance of the crevice in the wall whence the maiden had seemed to come, and where she had to his thinking disappeared. It was long rumoured that he had struggled bravely with death—or rather that he could not die, because the curse was upon him—until the maiden, garbed in white as usual, appeared to him once more. He stretched forth his arms—she stooped over him ;—he raised his head—she kissed his lips ;—and he died.

The white maiden, tradition tells us, has not since been seen in the ruins of Thurnberg.

LURLEY.

Lurley, or the Lurley-berg, is a celebrated mass of rock of basaltic formation, situated a little above Thurnberg, on the same side of the river. Of few spots in the entire course of the Rhine are so many wild and wonderful legends related; but as it would be utterly impossible to detail them all here, the following selection is offered as a fair specimen:—

LORE-LAY.

In the early days of Germany—it may have been about the beginning of the eleventh century—there dwelt at Bacharach-on-the-Rhine a damsel who was so surpassingly beautiful, that she turned the heads, or broke the hearts, of all those who approached within the sphere of her attractions. Yet she was as good as well as a beautiful maiden; and by no means prided herself on the distress which her beauty caused among her countless wooers. It would have been hard indeed if, amidst the crowd of suitors of all stations which hourly beset her, she had not found one to her mind; or that she alone should be insensible to the violent passion she inspired in others. It was

not so : for she loved, and was beloved. A neighbouring knight was the object of her choice ; and every thing seemed to tell of a similar affection on his part for her. They met a-nights in a neighbouring wood, when the silver moon shone brightly on the face of the deep, still, waters of the river, or at the first ray of early sunshine, when it was summer-time, in the lovely valley of the Rhine. Then and there were interchanged their vows of love and truth ; and there they loved each other all unrestrained, except by the presence of an Omniscient Power. Their tender secret long remained concealed, until the knight, seized with a sudden fit of martial enthusiasm, abandoned his ladye-love, his home, and his country, and at the head of his followers went to a distant land to seek danger—perhaps to find death. Then it was that the passion of poor Lore-Lay became known to all ; for her heart was broken, and she could not hide her affliction from any. But her charms still continued in full force : grief did not diminish their influence ; nay, sorrow appeared only to add to their power. Those who have seen a lovely woman in distress—her soul weighed down by sadness—her eyes filled with tears—can easily conceive how it should so happen ; those who have not, never, we trust, will have the opportunity of contemplating such a tender and touching sight. The number of her lovers increased daily, — nay, hourly ; and the effect of her charms on them assumed every moment a more fatal character. Some went raving mad among the forests, finding no solace but in carving the beloved name upon the bark of the trees ; —others became hypochondriac, and spent their days in moping melancholy, objects of pity to the world, and of solicitude to their friends ;—and not a few, in the fever of their passionate frenzy, flung themselves into the bosom of the Rhine, to rest from their anxieties

“ Under the waters cold.”

In such circumstances, was it at all to be wondered at that fathers feared and mothers hated the very name of the lovely maiden ? But, alas ! she was as hapless as those who thus pined and died for her. Now arose a cry from all quarters of the Rhenish country against her : the havoc which her beauty made amongst the hopes of the most illustrious houses of the land was every where felt : her extraordinary influence over the minds of

the young men was attributed to magic ; and she was finally accused of being a foul sorceress. An accusation of this kind was, perhaps, one of the most dreadful which could be made against a human being, at that period of ignorance and barbarous prejudice ; as it was scarcely possible to disprove it, and altogether improbable that the disproof would be credited, however it might be effectual. In this cruel position was poor Lore-Lay placed, by that which has been the curse of nations as well as of individuals, "the fatal gift of beauty."* We shall now see what followed.

At this time, the Archbishop of Cologne held court criminal at Rhense ; and to his tribunal was Lore-Lay cited by her accusers. The charges against her were, that she practised the black art to ensnare the hearts of young men ; that she used incantations with flame and magic wand ; and that she was aided in every thing she did by the prince of the powers of darkness. This was a fearful charge in those days ; but the love-lorn maiden heeded it not at all. She appeared before the judgment-seat of the prelate on the first summons ; seeming in nowise moved at the nature of the accusation or its probable consequences. Her youth, her superhuman beauty, her grace, and her gentle bearing, prepossessed every one in her favour ; even the aged archbishop himself felt the force of these combined charms, and could scarcely comport him as the occasion required. The very menials of the court, men hardened to human suffering by the habit of long acquaintance with it, were moved even by her most melancholy loveliness to pay her every attention unbought. Never before was criminal so honoured in a court of justice ;—never before was such deference paid to an accused person.

"Lovely maiden," it was thus the pious prelate spoke to her when the trial had concluded, "I have heard all against thee and believe nothing of it. Pity, not persecution, shall you find from me. Yet fain would I hear from thine own lips whether it be true, as it is alleged by thy persecutors, that thou hast given

- "Italia, Italia, o tu, cui feo la sorte
 Dono infelice di bellezza, ond' hai
 Funesta dote d' infiniti guai,
 Che in fronte scritti per gran doglia porte."
 FILICAJA, *Sonetti*, "All Italia."

thyself over to the powers of darkness, and that thou workest sorcery by means of flame and magic wand? Speak, and shame them to silence."

The heart of the aged archbishop was touched by her extraordinary beauty; and he waited her answer with the impatience of a love-sick boy. But the object of his solicitude only wept bitterly; and there was not a dry eye in the crowded court, as the big tears rolled down her delicate cheeks, like dew-drops on a rose-leaf. Every heart sympathized with her sorrow.

"My lord," she began, "you are right: I am no sorceress; but I am a very wretched creature. To die is my only wish on earth. Oh, hapless me that I should be the death of so many! But, my lord, I am innocent of all evil arts: the only flames I know of, are those of my eyes—would that they were shrouded in darkness for ever: the only magic wand I make use of is my arm—would that I had never been born: the only charms I used, are those which nature has given me—oh, God, that I were dead! Do as you will with me,—consign me to the flames if you deem fit. I shall suffer freely—I shall meet death rejoicingly—I am a-weary of life—a-weary—a-weary!"

She wept again: and the crowd sobbed audibly in unison with her: the prelate was silent, sunk in deep thought for a considerable period after she had ceased speaking.

"Most beautiful of God's creatures," at length he said, "how can I give thee to the flames without casting myself into the burning also? How can I break short the thread of your young life, without breaking my own heart too? It may not be. Thou art innocent of crime; as God will judge me, thou art stainless and pure as the fresh-blown lily of the valley. No power of darkness aids thee to win the hearts of men: Heaven's own reflection shines out of thy deep, blue eyes, and beams in thy lovely countenance. Even I, old and feeble, and devoted to the church as I am, feel the influence of thy charms. Go, beautifullest of God's creatures. Go!—thou art free."

A murmur of approbation filled the court. All present seemed to rejoice at her acquittal; nay, even her very persecutors themselves caught the fond contagion, and smiled approvingly, though it was at their own defeat. Another pause ensued: still Lore-Lay stirred not.

"It is not seemly, my lord archbishop," she spake after some time, in a voice sweet as the sounds of an Æolian harp to the ear of a half-awakened sleeper; "it behoves not your exalted station, to jest thus with a hapless maiden. I have been the cause, the innocent cause, of many deaths: I have come hither to expiate my involuntary crimes with my life. I desire nothing but to die."

"It may not be, it may not be," replied the prelate; "you are guiltless of sin."

"Pray to God for my poor soul," continued the despairing Lore-Lay, "pray to God that he may pardon me. I am a-weary of existence; I fain would die. For that I came hither. Life is to me no boon—to breathe is no blessing."

"And why, hapless maiden? for such you seem to be," asked the bishop. "Is not God good to you beyond most of his creatures? In the pride of youth and beauty, to desire death! say, Why is it so?"

"That love for me which others felt, I feel for one who has long deserted me," pursued the maiden; "I love him beyond all on earth—God will pardon me, if, in the madness of my passion, I love him better than all in the heavens also. And he loved me too,—passionately, fondly, for awhile. But a change came over his affections. On a sudden he grew cold in his deportment towards me; every hour I marked the adverse change increase. The love of fame, the desire of glory in battle, conquered his love for me. He went to seek them. I was left alone, deserted abandoned, broken-hearted.—Oh, God! oh, God!"

It would have almost made a misanthrope in love with human nature, to see the unfeigned sympathy which the artless grief of this girl excited in the bosoms of the spectators: bearded men strove not to repress the visible signs of their great grief and sorrow; and maids and matrons wept aloud in their deep distress.

"Never more shall I see him," she concluded; "or, if I do, never more shall I see him as mine. He will haply be the lord of a noble lady; and, in the pride of her birth and her beauty, he will forget or despise the poor and lowly Lore-Lay. Therefore, let me die! God have mercy on me!"

There was another pause in the proceedings of the court; the maiden would not depart; and the crowd would fain linger

while she stayed, to contemplate her surpassing beauty. At length the archbishop beckoned to three of his most trustworthy followers. They were aged knights, with long gray beards, and had been in his service from boyhood.

"Here, my trusty friends," he spake as they approached, "I confide to your care a precious treasure—a pearl beyond all price. Accompany this lovely maiden to the nearest convent of noble ladies on the other side of the river. Give her up to the abbess, with my express desire that she shall have all requisite attention paid to her: and there let her pass the remainder of her life in peace. Thank God, I have had sufficient strength of spirit to discharge my duty."

The old knights motioned to their fair charge; and she mounted a gentle-paced palfrey used by the archbishop himself in his journeys. The multitude which filled the court, poured itself impetuously into the open space in front of the edifice, to see her depart; to catch a last look of her heavenly countenance;—some to kiss the hem of her garment as she sat in the saddle: these deemed themselves fortunate indeed.

"Go, lovely Lore-Lay," added the prelate, extending his hands over her bowed head, and blessing her fervently; "Go, loveliest of God's creatures, and be happy! Many a heart you have made sad this day;—and mine is among the number."

They rode off, followed by the benedictions of the crowd. In due time they reached St. Goar, and there took boat to cross the river. The convent to which they were bound lay behind the hills which skirt the stream, in one of the secluded valleys of the Taunus mountains. Their direct path thither was close by the mass of basaltic rock, now known as the Lurley-berg. Until they reached this spot, the maiden had uttered not a word; and her escort, in respect to her, as well as to their lord's commands, had not intruded on her privacy even by a single observation: but as they wound by the base of this rugged cliff, she broke the silence which she had so long kept, and thus outspoke to these ancient men, whose almost frozen blood boiled up again with the fervour of youth, to hear her mellifluous tones and words, and see her sorrow-stricken countenance, beautiful beyond all they had ever before beheld, even in its deep sadness.

“ Noble knights, I have but one wish to gratify. It is in your power to grant it. Say, will you ? ”

It was like the contention of hot youth, that which displayed itself in the emulation of those ancient and honourable men, each to assure her the first, the most fervently, that they were at her devotion.

“ I would fain ascend this rock,” she pursued, “ to take from its summit a last look at the castle of my beloved. That done, I shall be at peace ; and the cloister or the grave may then hide me for ever.”

The old knights alighted from their barbed steeds ; and, iron-clad as they were, sought to surpass each other in assisting her up the rugged face of the acclivity. But she needed no assistance from them ; she seemed to be endowed with a new life ; and a strength far beyond that of her sex and years appeared to animate her. The mountain top was soon gained — for she clomb with the speed and certainty of a chamois ; and long ere her eager attendants had reached the midway point, where they lay panting and weary, and unable for some moments to proceed further from heat and fatigue, she stood erect on the extreme verge of the precipice overhanging the bright and beauteous river which rolled gloriously below.

A gay barque bearing down with the current caught her eye. She gazed on it like one inspired. It approached nearer ; — its pennons flaunted in the idle wind ; — its white sails flapped heavily against the masts. A noble knight stood in the bow ; he was motionless as a statute, and seemed absorbed in deep thought. Lore-Lay uttered a piercing shriek ; the knight in the barque looked up at the sound. The maiden’s attendants stopped short in their ascent ; they were struck with horror ; they feared even to breathe ; for there, on the extremest point of the precipice, her hands stretched out towards the advancing vessel, her long, dark hair floating backward in the light breeze, and her white garments filled with wind like the wings of a seraph, she stood a picture terrible for those who loved her to look upon.

“ ’Tis he ! ’tis he ! ” she cried ; “ ’tis he ! I see him once more.”

The barque now neared the bend in the river made by the mountain. Then, as now, it was a place of danger and dread.

But, though the mariners of that gay argosy crowded the deck, it was not to care for the safety of their vessel, but to gaze on the beautiful phenomenon above them. Altogether, it was a most fearful sight to see.

“Yes, yes,” she proceeded, “’tis he! ’tis he! he comes back to me again! He would not stay in a far land, while his poor Lore-Lay was pining at home. Bless him! Heaven bless him! And I see no noble bride beside him. He is true to his hapless maiden! I cannot keep from him;—I feel as though I were borne towards his bosom by the wings of the wind. I go—I go—bless him, Heaven!”

With these words she flung herself forward from the rock towards the river; and just as the waters closed over her with a dead splash, the barque below struck on the foot of the precipice, and in a moment more was swallowed up in the surging deep. No vestige was ever more seen of men or of maiden. The lady and her lover—for it was in truth her truant knight—slept beneath the tide; and twice a hundred warriors slept with them. Since then the rock has taken her name; and tradition has been busy in various ways with her sad story.

The next legend is of a somewhat different character; but it is equally tragical in the result. The simple dwellers on this shore of the Rhine receive it as gospel; and, in their eyes, to doubt its truth would be well-nigh equal to the commission of sacrilege. It is the one, of all the others, in connexion with this romantic spot, to which they are the most attached.

In ancient times, a maiden was often seen by moonlight seated on the highest point of the overhanging Lurley-berg, where she sang so sweetly snatches of unknown melodies, that she fairly enchanted the hearts of all her hearers. The consequence was, that many lives were lost in the river. The mariners of the Rhine boats, heedless of the dangers which beset them at this point of the navigation, once they heard the seducing song of the water-nymph, altogether abandoned their

charge to the course of the current, and frequently perished in the whirlpool close to St. Goar, or were wrecked against the rocks which hemmed in the river on both sides at this spot. But though many had seen the syren at a distance, and in the uncertain light of the moon, no one was known to have approached her except a young fisherman of Oberwesel. He was quite a favourite with the nymph: and, in process of time, they met almost every evening, when the last rays of the setting sun tinged the peaks of the distant mountains. On these occasions she would sit and sing to him for hours together, while his head rested on her lap, and he reposed himself after the labours of the day; and when he arose to leave her she would accompany him to the river shore, and shew him the spots whence, on the morrow, he might take the most fish. In those places pointed out by the water-maiden, he was always sure to have a successful haul on the following day. These things, however, became soon noised abroad; and before long the history was spread far and wide, on the banks of the Rhine, from Cologne to Basel. One night, however, the young fisherman went forth on his appointment at the usual time, and never returned again. In vain was the river dragged in all directions; in vain was the neighbouring country every where explored; no trace of him could be discovered. He was seen no more.

About this time the prince palatine of the Rhine held his court in Stahleck. His only son, Graf Ludwig, a beautiful youth, heard of the strange story of the young fisherman and the water-nymph, which was then quite current in the country; and, with the romantic feeling of the age, he resolved within himself to visit the Lurley alone. To this end he obtained leave from his father to drop down the river, under pretence of hunting in the wood which then covered the country between Oberwesel and St. Goar; and he embarked in a small boat, accompanied only by one boatman, as if for that purpose. But, instead of directing his course towards the wood, he abandoned his little barque to the current, and let it drift down the river towards the Lurley Rock. It was a delightful evening in autumn; the daylight had just departed when he came in view of the basaltic mass; and the first stars, the sentinels of the sky, had beautifully

begun to twinkle in the face of the dark-blue heavens. As he drew near the long-wished-for spot, his every faculty was strained to the utmost pitch to discover the object of his search, and his whole frame was fevered with emotion and anxiety. Nearer and nearer drew the barque to the dangerous rock; and more and more did his agitation increase.

“See! see!” cried the boatman; “there she is, my life on’t!”

But he spoke too late, for Ludwig had already seen her. With outstretched arms and burning glances, he stood on the bow of the boat, and only murmured to himself—

“Beautiful! beautiful!—oh, how beautiful!”

He was evidently lost: the syren had flung the spell of her beauty, the most powerful of all spells, over him.

Nearer and nearer drew the barque to the base of the rugged precipice; and more and more seemed the hapless youth to be fascinated with his fate.

The Lurley nymph sat on the summit of the rock; she seemed unconscious of his approach. It would appear as though she thought herself in the deepest privacy; for she gave her long yellow hair freely to the fresh breeze of the night, and half disrobed her exquisite form, as though she would make her simple toilette on the mountain top, her only covering the canopy of heaven.

Nearer and nearer still came the barque to the base of the precipice.

She now began to sing. It was like a wild mountain melody the song she warbled; but it still had nothing of the earth in its wonderful modulations. Ever and anon, in the pauses of her song, she would grasp her floating tresses and fling them playfully over her shoulders, which gleamed like alabaster in the starlight; and then she would change the melody from grave to gay, or from merriment to the most melting tenderness imaginable.

“To land! to land!” shouted the impatient youth; “to land! to land!”

But the boatman heeded him not: he, too, was fascinated. Alas, alas, for both!

The maiden now seemed as though she was for the first time aware of their presence. She looked down from her lofty throne, and she smiled on the young prince.

"It is no dream, she waves her hand," cried he; "she smiles on me! to land! to land!"

In a moment more the frail barque had struck against the sharp rock, and was shattered to pieces. Ludwig strove but a brief space with the overwhelming waters: as he saw the nymph disappear, he sunk to rise no more—

"Deep in the caverns of the deadly tide;"

and the foaming waves soon murmured a dirge over him. The life of the boatman was saved as if by a miracle.

The intelligence of his dreadful bereavement soon reached the ears of the prince palatine; and his anguish was equal to his loss. He issued the strictest orders for a search after the syren who had betrayed his son to destruction; and he commanded that those who seized her should slay her on the spot without a single moment's respite. He also offered a large reward to her slayer. But though the prospect thus held out was tempting to the last degree, still there were found very few of his courtiers who would venture to undertake the task;—such was the dread which the young count's untimely end had inspired in all. One alone of the multitude of his retainers, a captain in his guard, a rough old soldier, named Diether, undertook it. The only requital he desired was, that if he succeeded in laying hands on her he should have free permission of the prince to hurl her headlong into the Rhine; to the end that she might not be able to free herself from bonds and prison by her magical arts and incantations. The prince granted his request at once; and furnished him with a strong body of followers. They departed on their errand about the evening hour.

The sun had just sunk below the horizon as they arrived at their destination. Forming his followers into a semi-circle about the rugged base of the rock, Diether himself, in company with three of his stoutest and best men-at-arms, clambered as well as

they could up the precipice towards the summit. Even as they reached to within a few yards of the top, the moon suddenly broke forth from a mass of dense black cloud which had long hovered over the heavens, and shot a sweet, silvery light on the crags, and cliffs, and the shining waters which washed their foundation.

“See, see!” cried the leader to his followers, “there she is! —hush! I’ll catch her!”

And there she sat sure enough, on the extreme edge of the precipice, binding up her long yellow hair with a band of amber beads, interspersed with diamonds of the purest water, pearls beyond all price, topazes, and sea-green emeralds. As she sat she sang as sweetly as ever, and rocked herself occasionally on her soft seat of green sward, as if to keep time to the transcendently wild and beautiful melody which she chanted. But, though apparently absorbed in her pleasing occupation, she was not heedless of what was passing in her vicinity, or unaware of the approach of her foes. She sprang on her feet as they half surrounded the small plateau on which she sate, so as to cut off all communication with the landward side of the rock, and leave her only in possession of the edge of the precipice on which she then tottering stood.

“Men,” she cried, “what do you seek? Whom do you want? What would ye?”

“You, sorceress!” shouted Diether; “you who murdered our prince’s son:—you, witch that you are!”

“But what to do?” resumed she. “I did not murder your prince’s son.”

“To drown you in the Rhine,” cried Diether, rushing forward to seize her.

She waved her hand, and he felt that he could not stir. His affrighted followers were even as he was, spell-bound and bewitched for the moment.

“Well, well,” said she, smiling on her paralysed foes; “well, well, if it must be, it will be. But the Rhine must come for me, before I go to the Rhine.”

With this she unloosed the braid which bound her yellow hair, and flung it upon the face of the waters. Her long

tresses floated wildly in the wind, as she whirled rapidly around on the verge of the precipice, and crooned a Runic rhyme to the following effect :—

“ Father, father, send in haste
Thy white steeds, so strong and fast—
That like wind the waves be pass’d.”

She had scarcely concluded when a fierce storm suddenly rose, and swept across the surface of the waters like a wild whirlwind. The Rhine, as if by enchantment, at once overflowed its banks, and boiled up, foaming, to the topmost peak of the Lurley Rock.

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! ” laughed aloud the maiden.

“ We are lost,” cried the three spell-bound soldiers, as the current swept over their steel greaves and filled their boots with the cold water. Still they could not stir to save themselves, more than they could to seize the river-nymph.

“ Thank you, father ; thank you,” cried she, smiling sweetly.

Diether and his men-at-arms muttered a *pater* and *ave* ; for they expected to see some monster of the deep come forth to devour them. They witnessed, however, no such appalling sight. All they could perceive were three foam-crested waves, which had very much the appearance of three well-shaped white horses, rush in a cloud of foam and spray to her feet.

“ Thank you, father ; thank you,” exclaimed she again, as she flung herself in the hollow behind the waves, which looked as though it were a chariot to which the steeds were yoked.

The water was now breast-high around the hapless Diether and his companions in misfortune ; and they gave themselves up for lost. Meanwhile the nymph lay back in her aqueous chariot, as though she reclined on a velvet couch. When she reached the middle of the stream, however, she rose, and waving her hand with a backward motion towards the bewitched men, who were then gurgling down the flood, as it washed up to their eyes and over their mouths, said aloud—

“ You are free, go.”

With these words she suddenly sunk in the depths of the

river ; which as suddenly receded into its accustomed channel, without leaving a trace of the inundation of the preceding moment behind it.

Diether and his comrades were then aware that the maiden of the Lurley was an Undine, or River Nymph ; and they vowed within themselves never to meddle with her more. It is needless to say that they betook themselves to speedy flight ; their companions in arms, whom he had stationed at the base of the rock, had made their escape with difficulty from the overwhelming force of the waters.

Next morning the body of the young prince was washed ashore at the portal of the Pfalz, whither it had come contrary to the course of the current ; a fact which afforded food for wonder to all, except Diether and his escort in that fruitless expedition.

Thus they sung his loss within the high halls of his bereaved and childless sire ; these words were his dirge :—

REQUIEM.

Wail aloud ! wail aloud !
In the deep voice of sorrow ;
Like a tall tree he 's bowed,
To revive not the morrow.
The strong hand of Death
Laid him low in his glory,
As the fierce tempest's breath,
The broad oak ere 'tis hoary.

He has gone from our gaze
Like the sun at the gloaming ;
When his last lingering rays
Point to darkness that 's coming.
He has passed from our sight,
Like a ripple on the river ;
Which just laughs in the light,
And then settles for ever.

Like a meteor's fleet gleam,
Which, scarce shining, hath perished ;
Like a dim, fading dream,
By the soul in vain cherished :
Like an eagle's high flight,
Soaring upwards for ever ;
He has sped from our sight,
To return again — never.

Since that time the Lurley nymph has never been seen : but many and many a fisherman on the river, and many a belated wanderer on the shore, still hears her voice like that of an echo — faint, sweet, and dying in the distance.

The last of the legends of the Lurley nymph, to be presented in these pages, has been attempted in rhyme. There is little in it but the mystery with which it abounds, and which nothing may dispel.

“It is drear—it is cold—in the sky is no light ;
Fair ladye, where ride ye, so late in the night ?
The wood it is wide—you're alone, I can see—
Then come to my castle, my leman to be.”

“I may not—man ever but woos to betray—
My heart has been broken, 'tis many a long day—
Yet, hark ye ! I warn ye this wild wood to flee ;
Ye may ken well your game, but ye yet ken not me.”

“How bravely are ladye and barb both bedight !
How lovely she looks in the gloom of the night !
I ken ye—Heaven save me !—this snare make me free—
Yes ! yes !—you're the syren of steep Loreley !”

“Thou hast said it : enthroned on my rock o'er the Rhine,
Like a queen I look down on the depths that are mine :
But, 'tis drear—it is cold—in the sky is no light—
Hark ye !—wander no more in this wild wood by night.”

This ballad closes the selection of legends connected with the Lurley-Berg ; and here, therefore, we leave the subject.

THE SEVEN SISTERS.

A little above the Lurley-Berg, seven small rocks rise very nearly in the middle of the Rhine, and are distinctly visible when its waters are low. These rocks are named Die Sieben Jungfrauen—the Seven Maidens ; and tradition states that they were once fair women, sisters all, daughters of the noble house of Schönberg ; for their hard-heartedness, “ ages long ago,” transformed into these rugged stones by the Lurley nymph ; on a day that they dropped down the stream from their castle at Oberwesel, to their castle of Rheinberg, erewhile adjacent to the spot they now stand in.

This is their story.

Through that narrow cleft, in which the river runs from above, are visible the dark towers of Schönberg, high over Wesel. It was once the proudest castle on the Rhine ; as it is now the most ruinous. In ancient times, centuries since, it was the residence of seven beautiful sisters, who were known, generally, by the title of the seven fair countesses. They lived alone ; for they had been orphans from girlhood ; and near relations they had not any. They were very beautiful ; and common report, which spread abroad the intelligence of their loveliness, did not fail, as usual, to exaggerate it a little also. But little exaggeration, however, might exist on the subject ; for, as I have said before, they were very beautiful. From far and near came noble knights and stalwart barons, in crowds, to woo and to win them ; and for leagues around every knight and noble failed not daily to pay them the tribute of his homage and admiration. To see them, was found, by the saddest experience, to love them ; and those even of their suitors who could have no reasonable hopes of success, still lingered near them, as the moth, though often scorched, flutters round the flame which finally consumes him. What with the coming of

lovers, and what with the fêtes which they devised for the entertainment of the fair objects of their affection, the old castle was more like the stately court of a sovereign prince than the abode of a feudal baron. All this pleased the sisters very much; they were proud of the homage rendered to their beauty by the bravest and the best in the land; they loved to see their home the centre of pleasure and gaiety; and, in short, they were happy to their hearts' content, neither wishing nor knowing any delight beyond that of which they were in the daily enjoyment. But, with all their beauty and fascination, the truth must be told—they were heartless—or, perhaps, it should be qualified—their hearts as yet knew not what it was to reciprocate the love they inspired. One-half of their nights was spent in talking over the occurrences of the day with each other; and more than half of that period was occupied by them in raillery of the temporary lovers they had made happy for the moment by their capricious selection;

“The Cynthia of a minute.”

Years lapsed in this sort of life, and still their feelings, if they had any, remained untouched. Many of their suitors, weary and heart-sick of their coquetry, abandoned them; some to return to their homes; others to end their unappeasable pangs in the waters of the river: others, again, to woo and win—not fairer, for that could not well be—but, doubtless, far better, because much more loving, brides. But one division of despairing lovers had no sooner departed, than another, undeterred by their fate, made its appearance:

“For youth is stormy, and life is vain:”

each of whom made sure of the prize which had disappointed his predecessor; and only sympathized in his fortune when he had shared his fate.

The fair sisters, however, were not much longer destined to sway uncontrolled the hearts of their admirers. As common report had spread abroad, and exaggerated their beauty, so had she trumpeted forth the tale of their loves, the pride of their hearts, and the coldness of their feelings, likewise with exagge-

ration. There was at this period a crowd of nobles and knights in their castle, all contending for their hands, and emulous of their slightest favours ; but they were also aware of the fate of those who had gone before them—the coquetry of the damsels was not concealed from them—and they had sufficient of sound reason left, though all over head and ears in love, to perceive that they were likely to be treated as the rest of their lovers—used, abused, and then laughed at, for their great pains and exceeding folly. In this condition of mind they naturally cast about for some means of self-defence ; and sought, in every direction, a mode to ensure success. The result was, a meeting of all then in the castle, and a friendly interchange of sentiment on the subject. A resolution was ultimately entered into, and signed by every individual present—that, should the seven fair maidens fail, within one month, of selecting from among them an equal number to be their bridegrooms, then, one and all, would they abandon the castle in a body, and not alone never again return to it themselves, but endeavour to dissuade all those whom they knew or could obtain access to, from venturing near it ; or, failing in that, to force them back, or slay them. To this effect they further bound themselves by an oath, to beleaguer the castle, so as to bar from thenceforward all access to its fair inhabitants. This resolution they communicated in due form to the fair sisters.

What was to be done ? The damsels were nonplussed. Never before had they known what it was to have their wills disputed, still less to be threatened with coercion, or compelled to act in anywise contrary to their most capricious inclinations. As usual, they met together at night, and took counsel with one another on the mode by which they could best extricate themselves from this dilemma. Like true women, the more they were threatened, the more they defied danger ; the more they were made acquainted with their unreasonable conduct, the more they were determined to persist in it. The resolution which their lovers had come to, however just and proper it may appear to others, seemed in their eyes an offence which no expiation could atone for ; and they, too, came to a solemn decision, in which they also bound themselves, by a dreadful oath, to have a full revenge on them for it. Next morning they

despatched their confidential maid to each of the knights and nobles, their suitors then under their roof, with a message signifying that they acquiesced in the demand which had been made by them : and that they were prepared to take seven among their number for their future spouses. However, to avoid anything like an invidious selection, where all were so deserving of the preference, they further signified that they had determined to choose by lot who should be the happy bridegrooms on the occasion. This pleased the lovers very much ; and they were quite happy at the success of their project. Time and place were then fixed for drawing the lots ; and every preparation was made accordingly.

The day and hour appointed had arrived : and in pursuance of the appointment, the wooers, twenty in number, were gathered together in the great banqueting-hall of the castle. When they had all taken their places at the massive round table which stood in the centre of this spacious apartment, the maid, the former emissary of the fair sisters, entered ; bearing in her hands a large silver tray, on which lay twenty lots, each endorsed with the blazon of a separate suitor. On seven of these lots of folded parchment were inscribed the names of the seven sisters. What the cunning wenches had anticipated came to pass. Each knight and noble naturally caught at his own colours : but the thing was so contrived, that the seven sisters fell to the lot of the seven ugliest and most misshapen among the crowd. The emotions which succeeded were as manifold as the modes in which they exhibited themselves : some cursed their ill chance : others railed at the fickle goddess, Fortune : some smiled bitterly : some laughed outright : many gnashed their teeth in despair, and vowed vengeance on their favoured rivals, or destruction on themselves : while a few—a very few only, perhaps not two of the score—acquiesced in their fate, and bore it philosophically. When this storm of swearing, imprecation, and laughter, had subsided, and the confusion of tongues had given place to an ominous silence, the Abigail informed the fortunate winners of the beautiful prizes, that their future brides impatiently awaited their appearance in the garden chamber, and bade them hasten to their embraces. There was, however, little occasion to urge them thither : on the wings of

love, full of hope and happiness, they fled to their feet. They entered the chamber: a dim delicious light, such as be seemed the objects and the occasion, served as a veil for the blushing faces of the fair expectants, without concealing a single charm of their faultless forms or features. Enraptured, intoxicated, burning with passion, overflowing with love—every feeling of happy human nature excited to the highest pitch, the ardent lovers rushed towards the objects of their transports—threw themselves on their knees before them, and clasped —— only seven figures, large as life, garbed as the countesses usually were, and seeming, even at so short a distance, to be their exact counterparts. Confounded with mortification, maddened with disappointment, overwhelmed with disgrace, and covered with shame, the lovers looked for some moments at the figures, and then at each other, utterly at a loss for words to express the passions which convulsed their bosoms. While thus occupied, a loud, long-continued echo of jeering merriment struck on their ears. They cast their eyes on the Rhine, which flowed below the windows of the chamber, and there beheld the seven malicious maidens, with their trusty Abigail, embarking in a small boat, over-arched with green boughs, in form of a leafy bower, straining their sides with laughter, and making all manner of sport of the luckless men. Subsequently, they saw them mount on richly caparisoned mules, which seemed to have been awaiting them on the other side, and take the rugged road which led to their impregnable castle of Rheinberg.

Not long after, when the crowd of disappointed suitors had departed, these gay damsels returned to Schönberg, and again renewed the heartless life they had previously led there. But it was not destined to be of long duration. Their fate was only equalled by their folly; and those rocks which now interrupt the course of the current—all that remains of those proud beauties—are not harder than the hearts which once beat under them.

The legend of their metamorphoses is as follows.

Sir Walter, a noble youth, gifted with all the good qualities of

the age, and a minnesänger* to boot, was the lover of Adelgunda, one of these merry, mocking damsels. The poetical temperament sustained him for a considerable time against the jeers of these malicious ladies; and he withstood, longer than any previous lover had done, the multiform torments which it was their delight, one and all, to inflict on him. But at length his patience was exhausted also; and he resolved to attain the object of his love, or perish. Accordingly, he one day made a solemn declaration of his passion, accompanied by a determined proposal for the hand of Adelgunda. But the wicked wanton had foreseen this dilemma, and provided for it. By means of a preconcerted plan, her six sisters were invisible spectators of the scene; and, on its conclusion, they appeared, and overwhelmed the poor youth with every kind of ridicule. He could now endure it no longer. In a fit of wild rage he rode forth the castle, sped down the hill like lightning, rushed through Wesel even as a whirlwind might, and plunged, horse and rider, into the Rhine. He never rose more.

But in the "depths of the waters cold" how did he fare? He fared thus, if the legend can be credited:—

On awaking, he found himself in a palace of emerald, extended on a bed of subaqueous mosses. All around him was quiet as the grave. As he lay thus, he became aware of a shadowy form which flitted into the spacious chamber where he reposed; and soon he heard the sweet tones of a female voice, which sounded like the pent-up air in a sea-shell, calling on him by name.

"Walter," it spake, "Walter"—the whole scene was like a peaceful dream to his mind—"Walter, you must arise and follow me! Our queen, the gentle Lurley, awaits your coming: she would know your tale from your own lips. Tell her all—tell her without disguise—for she knows all. Rise and follow me! follow—follow—follow!"

The young knight arose and pursued for some moments the retiring echo: the fitting form of the naiad he saw no longer. In a few moments more he stood before the famous Lurley. She sat on a throne of coral rock, richly bordered with beautiful

* A Teutonic troubadour, so called from minne (love) and sänger (poet or singer). The chief of these German minstrels was a priest, Henry Frauenlob; and one, not the least famous among them, was a poor shoemaker, Hans Sachs, of Nürnberg.

mosses : and she was surrounded by all the shapes which have their home in "the waters under the earth." The reception she gave him was most gracious : she seated him beside her, and bade him relate his hapless story : he complied with her wish.

"Oh, Lurley ! Queen of the peaceful depths of the flood !" he concluded, "my heart was sore troubled at this event. I could brook life no longer. My harp even failed to soothe my great grief. So I said within myself, in the madness of the moment, 'I will cool my burning brain in yonder waters, and seek repose in the lap of the river-nymph.' I did so. I am here. The rest you know."

"Be the pangs of the world forgotten for ever !" spake the sweet voice of the fair water-spirit—"for ever and ever. Tune your gentle lyre as you list in these halls. Sorrow comes not hither ; nor may grief intrude on our never-ceasing happiness ! Be at peace from henceforth and for aye ! The reward of the poet should be the delight he confers on others : thine be that guerdon."

"Let pleasure and joy
For ever employ
The soul of the singer :
And never annoy,
His high soul destroy,
In life while he linger"—

resounded in a mellifluous chorus from the water-spirits who thronged the stately hall of audience, until the cadence of the song floated in the semi-pellucid atmosphere like the murmur of distant waves breaking on a sandy beach in the dead of a summer's night—

"Most musical, most melancholy."

"But yon proud damsels," spake the Lurley, and her lovely countenance assumed an expression of almost celestial anger, which it was beautiful, at the same time, and fearful, to behold—"they shall give pain to gentle hearts no longer. Hard as the stone are their bosoms : stone shall they be for ever and ever !"

"For ever and ever,
To warm again never,"

again sung the chorus of submarine beings ;

"For ever and ever."

“Go ye, my helpmates,” resumed the Lurley, addressing her attendant naiads, “allure them hither. I will prepare for them.”

Tempted by the transcendent loveliness of the day—the serenity of the skies—the smoothness of the stream—the smiling aspect of earth and heaven—the seven sisters of Schönberg set forth from their lofty castle, to cross the river to their little less lofty fortress, Rheinberg. They gained the middle of the stream: they spoke vauntingly of their power over the hearts of men: they laughed at the various disasters which had befallen their lovers.

“When will all our sport have an end, though?” asked the faithless Adelgunda of her companions; “for, I suppose, end it must have, some time or other.”

“Now!” replied Lurley sternly, as she stood before the boat, on the surface of the water, which rose in huge waves around her, and seethed and boiled above her head, as though a mighty fire was burning beneath its bosom.

“Now!” again exclaimed the angry spirit; and the sky grew black, and the thunder growled in the heavens above them.

“Now!” she solemnly repeated a third time; and all around became as dark as night: the river raging and foaming: the wind and the thunder roaring; and the forked lightning flashing through the dense gloom. It was like a foretaste of the infernal regions.

“Mercy!” shrieked the horrified maidens,—“mercy!—mercy!”

“That mercy you have shewn to others,” spake the Lurley, “that mercy shall be shewn to you. Die!”

She waved her hand, and the frail barque, with its fair freight, was swallowed down by the boiling flood.

Next morning, the boatmen on the river saw seven rocks, where never was rock before; and, since then, they have been known as “The Seven Sisters.”

OBERWESEL.—SCHÖNBERG.

Oberwesel, anciently known as Vesania, Ficelia, and Vesalia, is said by antiquarians to have been a Roman station on the Rhine during the universal dominion of that all-conquering people.* They further state, that Christianity was then known in this town; and they add, moreover, that Mammea, the mother of Alexander Severus, who privately protected the Christians, was slain there by the rebellious soldiers who slew her son, A.D. 235.

The earliest authentic notice, however, which we have of the existence of Wesel, occurs in the history of the Frankish monarchs of Germany. By them it was surrounded with walls, and fortified with towers; and the place was endowed with several valuable privileges. By an original document, dated 966, and still preserved, it appears that the town and its dependencies were granted by the Emperor Otho the First to the see of Magdeburg, to be held in fee by the bishop of that diocese.

* It is supposed to be identical with a place named Saliasoa, mentioned in the "Antonine Itinerary," as lying between Baudobrica (Boppard) and Bingium (Bingen). The names Vesaria, Besagnia, and Wesalia, have also been given to it in various ancient historical and geographical works.

It was first declared a free city by Frederic the Second, on his accession to the empire (A.D. 1215); and it was subsequently pledged to the Elector Archbishop of Treves, by Henry the Seventh, for a sum of money to enable him to defray the expenses of his expedition to Italy. Previous to its becoming an imperial city, it belonged to the ancient and powerful house of Schöenberg, whose castle still exists; a magnificent ruin without the town, on a high hill commanding it.

“In the church of the hospital, which forms the town wall on the shore of the Rhine,” observes Merian,* “there is still to be seen a wooden pillar, to which the child Werner von Wammenraidt was tied and scourged, previous to his crucifixion by the Jews. It bears the inscription, ‘Anno 1287, hat Wernerus de Wammenraidt den Tod gelitten 13 Kal. Maij.’” In the vault beneath this building it was that this tragedy is stated to have been enacted; and the legend of that transaction,—whether it be true or false, there are now no means of ascertaining,—is as follows:—

THE CRUCIFIED CHILD.

In the year 1287 the father of this youth, Conrad von Wammenraidt, lived in Bacharach. He was a pious, God-fearing man, and in much repute with the magistracy of the town. The strictness of his life was, however, very displeasing to an old woman, his neighbour; and her hate was increased by the strict abstinence from all intercourse with her, which he enjoined on his family. Determined to be revenged on him, she lay in wait—stole his son, Werner von Wammenraidt, as he played on the river-bank at the close of a summer’s evening—and sold him to some Jews, who were then dwellers in Oberwesel. The wretched hag knew the fate that awaited the hapless child; and she gloated over the sorrow it would cause his parents.

At this period, the Jews were a persecuted race all over the world; and, as a necessary consequence, they hated their persecutors, and all who were of their race or lineage. Poor Werner was, therefore, a very acceptable victim; for they deemed that they could satiate their hatred on him without dread and without

* Top. Arch. Mog. Trev. Col., repeatedly quoted in these pages.

danger. But Providence, which sees all things, and permits much of evil for its own wise purposes, sooner or later avenges the death of the innocent, and visits murder with its severest punishment.

In the vaults of a large house, close to the river, at the extremity of Oberwesel, the Jews held their annual orgies. It was midnight. The boy Werner was brought forward, and placed in the centre of a circle of bearded faces. All around him were to be seen only malignant eyes, and hearts thirsting for his innocent blood. A being, aged beyond the years of man, sat on a raised seat at the extremity of the vault. The child was hurried before him by the eager throng.

“What shall be his fate?” asked he, while his long gray beard trembled like an aspen in the breeze, and his voice echoed faintly like a sound from the recesses of a sepulchre.

“Crucify him! crucify him!” cried the infuriate crowd.

“Be it so,” spake the old man.

A black curtain at the opposite end of the spacious vault was momentarily withdrawn, and there stood the cross, surrounded by implements of torture. Again was the hapless boy hurried off from the vault. In a few moments more the curtain was withdrawn a second time; and there was the child exhibited, nailed to the cross, amidst the shouts and exultation of the barbarians who filled the place. His little mouth was gagged to stifle his screams, so that he suffered without the possibility of making himself heard. Vein after vein was opened by the murderers who thronged around him; and every torment was put into practice which a fiendish ingenuity, hating the very name of Christian, could devise or imagine. The child died under the infliction: and his death ended their hellish orgies.

Next night the body was sewed up in a sack filled with stones, and conveyed secretly to the middle of the Rhine, where it was sunk. It was not, however, permitted that the foul deed should pass unpunished. Early the following morning a fisherman saw the small, white hand of a child raise itself above the surface of the water, and continue in that position unmoved by the force of the current. As he gazed and wondered, he was joined by others of his craft, who saw it also. The news was soon communicated to the authorities of the town; and the river

was almost immediately covered with boats filled with spectators. It was decided that it must be the hand of a drowned child, and preparations were made to raise the body; but as they approached it for the purpose of doing so, the hand pointed up the stream, and began to move rapidly in that direction. The boats quickly followed; but they could never succeed in reaching it. As they proceeded up the river, they were joined by a great number of others, and the shores on both sides were crowded with spectators. They approached Oberwesel; they reached that part of the town which lies opposite the middle of the river. The strange story had preceded them. The whole population lined the bank. The hand made for the shore; it touched the bank; the old woman who stole the child sat among the spectators; the body of the murdered boy was flung by a sudden swell of the river at her feet. She fell senseless to the ground. Need it be said that the hand was that of the crucified child's corpse? Need it be stated that the finger of Providence was visible in the whole of this wonderful transaction?

The wretched old crone admitted her crime, and died. All the Jews in the neighbourhood were apprehended. One alone confessed under the torture; the rest were quite firm in their denial of the foul crime. The last test was applied to them. The murdered child was laid out in the church; and they were ordered in, one by one, to touch him. Wonderful to relate, the body bled afresh at every wound as soon as one of the murderers laid his hand upon it: those who were no parties to the dreadful deed, touched it without any manifestations of Divine wrath. As might be expected, the vengeance of outraged justice visited the murderers: all the others were only banished.

In commemoration of this event, the child was canonised; and this church was erected in his honour.

The ruins of the famous castle of Schönberg, which crowns the summit of the hill that overlooks Wesel, were once the abode of a family celebrated as much for their great deeds as for the remote antiquity of their descent. Originally Belmont, it is

said, they changed the name to its German equivalent, Schönberg; and, under that well-known appellative, they have been identified with most of the modern wars in Europe. The family of Schönberg purports to derive lineally from a family of the same name whose existence is attested in several acts of the reign of Charlemagne; but its highest title to fame will, perhaps, be found in the feats of its more recent ornaments—particularly in those of the famous Duke of Schönberg, killed at the battle of the Boyne, in Ireland, June 1st, 1690.

The seven sisters, whose fate has been already related in these pages, dwelt here, if the legend be true; and also the Counts of Arnheim, a family which, by intermarriage or succession, had acquired both the castle and the territorial powers of the Schönberg family in the middle ages.

This noble structure has been a ruin for centuries.

THE PFALZ.

The era of the first construction of the Pfalz, as well as the causes which led to the erection of such a structure in such a place, are lost in the obscurity of ages. Its proper name is the Pfalzgrafenstein, or Palatine's Rock; the pfalz (literally palace) is a modern abbreviation. Firm as the rock on which it is founded, it has resisted centuries of storm and hosts of foes; and still stands a monument of the past, perfect in its lowliness, while every one of its proud contemporary castles on both banks of this mighty river has fallen into ruin under the iron mace of war, or the crumbling touch of time. The best topographical authorities* seem to consider it as a watch-tower, or warlike toll-house, erected for the purpose of levying contributions on vessels passing up and down the Rhine; which conjecture is rendered more than probable by the paucity of legends connected with it, and the silence of traditionary lore on the subject of its existence. The only story told of it is the following—one, it will be perceived, having in it more of the local historical than of the purely romantic:—

* Widder, &c.

THE PEALZ, CAUSE, AND STEPPERS.

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AGNES AND HENRY.

On the death of Herrmann von Stahleck, palatine of the Middle Rhine, which we shall have to advert to very shortly,* Frederic the First (Barbarossa), emperor of Germany, bestowed the palatinate or principality of the pfalz upon his half-brother, Conrad von Staufen. This prince had no male heirs, and only one daughter, the beautiful Agnes von Staufen, the pride of the Rhenish land. It is not to be supposed that, on her reaching womanhood, she was long without wooers; on the contrary, nearly all the youthful princes, and every one of the scions of the noble houses of the Germanic empire, sought to win her heart and hand. Her own singular loveliness was, it is to be presumed, the principal cause of this desire on their part; but it is not impossible that the immense wealth and extensive possessions of her princely sire afforded them no inconsiderable inducement. Be this, however, as it may, suitors she had in abundance—from the prince in his pride, to the inheritor of sixteen quarters in his poverty—all equally high in their own estimation, and equally low in hers; for her heart was won by one every way worthy of her hand—Henry, duke of Brunswick, the eldest surviving son of that immortal hero, Henry the Lion. She loved him alone, and preferred him to every other; for his sake turning a deaf ear to the ardent addresses of Ludwig, the powerful duke of Bavaria, and slighting even those of the still more mighty Philip the Second, king of France. But the Emperor Henry the Sixth, son and successor of Frederic Barbarossa, heedless of the pain it might give the heart of his fair cousin, and anxious only that the palatinate should be preserved to his own family, forbade her union with any foreign prince, and sedulously set about effecting a marriage between her and one of his near relatives of the noble house of Hohenstaufen. Fortunately, her preference for Henry of Brunswick was as yet unknown to him; otherwise the most fatal results might have ensued to one at least of the lovers. It could not, however, remain long concealed from her father; and he, of course, wishing to conciliate his sovereign, entered into his views, and excluded the young prince from her presence. But even this severity did not suc-

* Vide "Stahleck."

ceed. Love soon surmounted every obstacle. With the sanction and connivance of Irmengarde, her lady-mother, the lovers met nightly in the gardens of Stahleck; and, to crown all, during the temporary absence of the pfalzgraf at the court of the emperor, their hands were united, as their hearts had long been, by the chaplain of the castle.

The pfalzgraf returned in time to Stahleck. His journey to court had principally for object the furtherance of the emperor's project, respecting the marriage of his daughter; and his mind was full of determination to compel her acquiescence in it. He was met at the gate by his wife, the good Irmengarde.

"How fares it with ye, since my absence?" said he, after the first fond greetings were over.

"My lord," she replied, with a look of much mystery, "you had scarce left, when a noble falcon flew hither. He hath a brown crest, a white throat, a keen eye, a powerful beak, and strong talons; and his pen-feathers are so long, and his wings so wide, that it is sooth to see he comes from a high eyry."

"What mean ye, my wife?" interrupted the pfalzgraf. "I understand this riddle not."

"This noble bird," continued Irmengarde, unheeding the interruption, "I have caught for thee. Come with me and see him."

She led the way to an adjacent chamber, and, throwing open the portal, pointed to the young Duke of Brunswick and the fair Agnes. Conrad's brow blackened; and although the lovers fell on their knees at his feet, and his wife supplicated for them with all her might, the cloud seemed only to thicken the more. At length it burst on their heads; and it was a fearful sight to behold. Little boots it to tell of the rage of an angry man; but the result was, that Duke Henry was dismissed from the castle under a strong escort, and Agnes confined to her own apartment. Next day the pfalzgraf gave orders for the erection of the Pfalzgrafenstein, on an isolated rock, which then rose bare and naked above the waters of the Rhine.

On its completion, Agnes was transferred thither; and her mother accompanied her, in preference to remaining at Stahleck. Whither Henry of Brunswick went, or what became of him, no one knew, or, if they did, dared not to say; for his name was for-

bidden to be mentioned within the precincts of the palatinate, under severe penalties. In this state things continued for some months.

In the meanwhile, the lovely Agnes was aware that she would soon become a mother. Until this time, the fact of her marriage had been concealed from her father; but it now became necessary to make it known to him. Irmengarde, accordingly, informed him of the circumstance, and of the situation of their child. His rage may be more easily imagined than described; defeated at all points, foiled when he thought himself most certain of attaining the object he had first at heart, he could scarcely bring his mind to listen to reason, or entertain for an instant the idea of reconciliation. But a stern necessity compelled him to acquiescence; and he was obliged to bow to a dispensation which all his foresight could not perceive, nor all his severity avert. Without an hour's delay he departed for Spires, where the emperor, his nephew, then held his court, and opened to him the true state of the case. It was an awful interview at the onset; for the monarch had set his soul on the project, and its defeasance almost maddened him. Conrad now became the intercessor; he had no other course left him: but the emperor seemed loath to listen to any thing in favour of the lovers; and threatened all concerned, directly or indirectly, in the marriage, with his bitterest vengeance. Reason, however, ultimately resumed its sway over him; and motives of state policy mingling with it, ere long restored his mind to its equilibrium. It might, so thought he, be the means of appeasing, perhaps of finally ending, the deadly feud which then existed between the houses of Welf and Hohenstaufen; and thus afford peace to the empire, while it would strengthen and give stability to his own dynasty. But still tenacious of retaining the palatinate in the hands of his family, he was determined to clog his consent to the union with as many conditions to that effect as possible.

"Well," he exclaimed, on the morning of the third day after this stormy audience, "well, my uncle, done is done. Let it be so. The Duke of Brunswick and Agnes shall not be separated by me, as they are united by God. But I warn you once for all, that I shall never recognise their progeny as the heir to your possessions, unless the marriage contract is perfectly formal in every particular. You look to that."

Conrad left the court with a heavy heart, and returned a sorrowful man to Stahleck; because, though convinced of his daughter's purity and his wife's prudence, he did not think it within the limits of possibility that such a contingency could have been provided for. The marriage, he was aware, stood good in the eyes of God and of man; but he did not deem for a moment, that all the multitudinous forms, which the unions of the high German nobility then required, had been observed; and he was too well assured that the omission of even the most trifling among them, would be fatal to the children of his daughter, in as far as regarded their succession to his title, dignities, and possessions, as Prince Palatine of the Middle Rhine. In this mood he was met by his wife; and he opened his heart to her on the subject.

"It is all hopeless now," said he; "the principality will pass to another on my death, and my name will be extinct for ever."

"Not so fast!" replied Irmengarde. "Methinks there is a remedy for that great evil still in existence. Think'st thou me a witless woman?"

He looked at her with some surprise, and answered,

"Nay, such wert thou never; but ——"

"—— But only in this case, thou wouldst say," she spake. "However, fear not; all is not yet lost."

She left the chamber hastily. In a short time she returned, holding forth to the enraptured gaze of her husband the marriage contract between Agnes von Staufen and Henry, duke of Brunswick, regularly drawn up, and complete in all its multifarious requirements. The chaplain who celebrated the marriage, and the witnesses who were present at it, followed.

It may be easily imagined with what delight Conrad received this welcome gift; and how elated he felt that the children of his daughter should not be disinherited of their right. He hastened to Spires; and, full of joy, he stood once more before the emperor. Need it be told how the emperor bit his lips in impotent vexation; or how Conrad triumphed in secret that his perfidious policy had been defeated? The instrument was perfectly valid; the keenest clerk or the most learned jurist could take no exception to it on any ground; nought then remained but to acquiesce in that which was inevitable. The emperor gave a reluctant consent, which

Conrad received with a hearty joy ; and, in a few days after, the nuptials of Henry and Agnes were publicly celebrated in court, with all the pomp and circumstance of the period.

They lived happy, and died so.

To avoid any future mistakes in the families of his descendants, Conrad, it is said, commanded a little chamber to be constructed in the pfalz, and ordained that all princesses palatine of his race should be there delivered of their first-born. So far the legend.

It appears from true history, that the emperor's fears respecting the stability of his dynasty were not altogether unfounded. On his death, and the election of his brother, Philip of Suabia, to the empire, Henry, duke of Brunswick, then palatine of the Middle Rhine, sided with another aspirant to the throne, his own brother Otto of Brunswick, afterwards Otto the Fourth, emperor of Germany. The consequence was, that he was placed under the ban of the empire, on the capture of Otto, and the accession of Frederic the Second to the imperial dignity ; and his principality, the palatinate, was bestowed by the victorious monarch on a faithful follower of his own, Ludwig, duke of Bavaria. The son of Ludwig, Otto of Bavaria, subsequently married the daughter of Henry, the deposed palatine, who bore the same name as her beautiful mother, Agnes ; and this union gave origin to the noble and powerful family of Wittelsbach, which so long possessed the principality.

It was at this point of the Rhine that the Prussian and Russian armies, under the command of Blucher, crossed the Rhine, on the morning of January 1, 1814.

GUTENFELS.—CAUB.

Gutenfels, in ancient times called Chaube, or Cub (the Castle), is believed to be built on a Roman foundation, and to have given its name to the town (Caub) which lies below it. The name of Gutenfels, or the Rock of Guda (Beatrix, Latin ; Guda, old German), is said to be derived from a fair lady, who dwelt there in early days, and whose destiny was, in some slight

degree, connected with the history of our own country. Thus runs the tradition respecting it:—

GUDA AND RICHARD OF CORNWALL.

In the middle of the thirteenth century, Count Philip von Falkenstein was the lord of Caub and of the castle which commanded it; and his beautiful sister, Guda, and he lived there together, the blessing of their vassals, and the honoured of their neighbours. Both were unmarried. Knights and nobles, nay, princes of the empire, wooed the fair Guda, and eagerly sought her hand; for she was beautiful beyond all the Rhenish maidens, and she was purity itself in her mind and manners: but they wooed in vain; none could win her heart; she turned a deaf ear to their sighs; she saw not their tears; and even to the earnest entreaties of her fond brother himself, that she would select a fitting spouse from her innumerable suitors, she gave for answer a cold but decided negative.

The Archbishop of Cologne, a proud and a pompous prince, gave a grand tourney in that ancient and opulent city. Among other Rhenish knights, the Lord of Caub was present at the fête ; and his fair sister Guda accompanied him. A mighty hand has painted in undying colours a similar scene at Ashby-de-la-Zouch,* and thus saved all future sketchers the trouble of attempting to depict such subjects. There were collected together within the walls of Cologne on that occasion the very flower of Teutonic chivalry ; and prodigies of valour and high feats of knightly skill were performed by many : but the deeds of all were eclipsed by those of a stranger knight, whose lineage was then known only to the archbishop. This stranger was a Briton ; and every warrior who entered the lists against him quailed before the power and agility of his arm, and the strength and speed of his noble charger. He was a man of middle age, or, rather, in the full flower of life ; tall, shapely, and handsome of face ; and he had an innate nobility in his look which shewed he was born to command, or that the custom of ruling had impressed on him that aspect as to make it so appear. A suit of costly armour incased his well-formed limbs ; his shield bore the British lion or, on a field of azure ; and his steed was of the noblest of the noble blood of English horses. He was the admiration of all : of the men for his bravery, and of the women for his noble bearing ; but none did he notice in return save Guda. On her were his eyes fixed before he charged his opponent in the tilt ; to her were they directed in the swift course ; and when the queen of the festal awarded him the meed of his valour, he saw her alone amid the brilliant throng which surrounded her elevated throne. They met once more at the ball : and he was by her side during the entire evening. Need it be said that such attention from such a man touched her heart ? She felt, for the first time in her life, that she had found one every way worthy of her love in the distinguished stranger ; and her secret joy knew no bounds, when her brother bade him to Caub, and he unhesitatingly accepted the hearty invitation.

Within seven days from the conclusion of the festal in Cologne, the horn which hung outside the castle-gate of Caub was sounded by a quaintly garbed squire ; and soon after the noble stranger of

* Scott—"Ivanhoe."

the tournament alighted in the court-yard. Philip von Falkenstein stood there to greet him ; and the lovely Guda, in a transport of pleasure, awaited him in her bower. Every attention which friendship could imagine, every care which love could devise, was lavished on him by both brother and sister ; and each seemed anxious only to emulate the other in making the stay of their guest as delightful to him as it was possible. Two days had already fled — fled like a blissful dream — and the third, the last he could spend in this happy state, had been entered on. Philip von Falkenstein had descended to the town to hold court there for an hour among his vassals ; and Guda sat alone, in her bower overlooking the Rhine, with the stranger knight. It was a lovely morning in autumn. The rich, full grapes hung in clusters from the vines ; the trees had put on the beautiful livery of that exquisite season ; the river rolled below with a murmuring sound, quite in unison with the scene ; and every thing around seemed happy.

“ Fairest of maidens,” began the Unknown, after a long pause, clasping reverentially in his own the unresisting hand of his gentle companion —

Guda blushed, and averted her bashful countenance : but he continued :—

“ — I love—I have loved you from the moment of our first meeting. May I hope ? ”

Guda scarce knew what to say, still less to do. But what boots it to tell a tale of wooing ? It is an old story known to every one. Guda blushed, and murmured assent, and the Unknown was enraptured. He prayed her to take it not amiss that even then he could not communicate to her his name ; but he promised that, before three months had expired, he should come and claim her openly as his bride.

“ In life and in death,” said the fair Guda, when the next morning they parted, “ I am yours. Nay, should a king, or a kaiser, woo me for his bride, I am thine—thine alone, and for ever.”

Three months had come and gone, and yet the maiden heard nought of her lover ; she wondered much at his continuous silence ; but still she attributed it to inevitable necessity. When, however, for the fourth and fifth time

“ ——— the moon’s pale horn
Had wax’d and waned o’er land and sea,”

and no tidings of him had reached her, she could scarce conceal her sorrow; and it would infallibly have been noticed by her brother, and its cause, perhaps, discovered, had he not been then actively engaged in the deep political intrigues of the period.

Conrad the Fourth had just finished his unfortunate reign over the German empire (A. D. 1246); and with him had expired the princely stock of the Hohenstaufen family. The purple was eagerly contended for by many competitors; but the principal among them were Adolph, duke of Holland; Richard, earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry the Third of England; and Alphonso the Tenth, king of Castile, commonly called Alphonso the Wise. Richard was chosen by a majority of the electors of the empire—a distinction which Hume says he owed to his “immense opulence,” but which romantic story tells us was entirely due to his own noble and knightly virtues; and he was accordingly crowned with all due solemnity* King of the Romans and Emperor of Germany. Philip von Falkenstein had sided with the Earl of Cornwall’s party, and given heart and hand to his cause, while Guda remained in the lonely castle of Caub brooding over her hapless destiny, and dreaming of her seeming faithless lover. Now, however, that peace was restored for a while, he once more made the halls of his fathers his abode.

The sixth month had commenced, when one morning at early dawn, as the sleepless maiden sat in her chamber window watching the course of the current, and thinking of him, without whom the world was to her as nothing, a stately cavalcade became visible at a distance, sweeping swiftly along the river-shore, and appearing to approach the castle. The polished armour of the knights who composed it glanced like sparks of brilliant fire in the rising sunbeams, and the tramp and neigh of their noble steeds, multiplied by echo, came like the sound of distant thunder on her ear. She felt agitated, although she knew not why. It was not that she expected to meet her lover among that gallant

* Hume says he was only crowned king of the Romans; “a circumstance,” he adds, “which seemed to render his succession infallible to the imperial throne.”

train, for she had long since given him up as lost—slain, she was led to think, in the strife which preceded the elevation of his countryman, the Earl of Cornwall; and yet, for a moment, a thought of the kind would involuntarily mingle with the tumultuous rush of sensations which filled her mind, and almost overwhelmed her by their vehemence and vividness. In a few moments more the gay train was at the castle-gate—the warder's horn sounded aloud, and a herald demanded admission for “Richard of Cornwall, king of the Romans, and kaiser of Germany.”

There was tumult enough among the menials and retainers in Caub that morning; and even Philip von Falkenstein, their lord, was so overpowered with the honour of a visit from his sovereign, that he scarce could control his own emotions. However, he received the prince in as princely a fashion as he could, and besought him to honour his paternal halls with his presence. The usual ceremonies done and over, the monarch's train disposed of, and something like order restored among the domestics of the castle, Richard and his host sat together to the morning meal. The great feudatories of the empire stood around their chief, to render him the nominal domestic service which their tenure of office implied. The monarch partook but sparingly of the entertainment; his mind seemed not quite at ease; he was reserved in his manner, and sometimes absent in his conversation; but altogether his remarks gave much gratification to his entertainer, for they were principally in praise of his fidelity to his cause, interspersed with thanks and expressions of gratitude for the good service he had personally rendered him.

“But I am not come hither solely for the purpose of praise and thanksgiving,” proceeded the emperor. “You have a fair sister, Sir Philip von Falkenstein?”

Philip bowed his head; but he was, notwithstanding, all amazement.

“Why graces she not your board?” continued Richard. “The fairest maiden in Germany should not be absent from the court of her sovereign.”

“My lord and master,” said Philip von Falkenstein, “it is not of her own free will that she sits in her bower alone; neither is it by my desire that she tarries to humble herself in

your presence ; but she is ill—deadly ill—that fair flower, once the fairest on the waters of the Rhine, has sorely withered, and I fear me much is about to pass away from us for ever.”

“For ever !” exclaimed the monarch,—“deadly ill !—Guda withered !—I came to ask of thee her hand. It must not be !—she shall not die ! Bring her hither.”

With these words he raised the visor of his helmet, which until then had entirely concealed his face ; and Philip von Falkenstein fell at the feet of his former guest, the stranger of the tourney at Cologne, the unknown victor of the lists in that splendid festal.

Richard raised and embraced him.

“From this moment be thou my brother,” said he ; “and now go and bring to me my beloved Guda.”

Philip hastened to obey his sovereign’s behest ; but ere he reached the door he was recalled.

“Yet, stay,” cried Richard ; “say not to her who I am. Tell her that a crowned king offers her his kingdom ; tell her that the empire is hers, if she so wills it ; that Richard of Cornwall woos her to become his bride ; and then bring to me her answer.”

Philip disappeared : a happy man was he to be the bearer of that message. Richard once more let down his visor, so as to hide his countenance. In a short while his host returned : but his step was slow to approach the emperor, and his brow was clouded.

“Well,” asked Richard, “what says she ? Grants she my suit ?”

“My lord,” replied Philip, hesitating to speak ——

“Out with the word !” cried Richard. “She refuses the hand of her sovereign—she will not be my empress ?” and he laughed loudly as he said the words.

“She tells me,” continued Philip, somewhat re-assured by the mood of the monarch, “that her heart is not hers to give : and that her hand goes only with her heart, even were it to the grave ! She bade me thank you for the high honour you intended for her ; but to tell you, that her troth is plighted to another, who sleeps the sleep of death, and whom she hopes speedily to follow to ‘where the weary are at rest.’ More she would not say ; neither would she mention his name.”

“ Well, well,” quoth the emperor, still laughing heartily, “ bring her hither ; say, her sovereign would hear his fate from her own lips. But be secret still.”

Philip again departed, and again returned. This time he led the lovely Guda into the imperial presence. Notwithstanding that sorrow had blanched the rose on her cheek, she was still so surpassingly beautiful, that all around the monarch were struck with amazement to see her.

“ Ladye,” began the monarch, “ you have rejected my suit? you refuse my offer?”

Guda would fain have spoken, but the words died in her throat, and she could find no utterance for them.

“ Nay, never heed,” continued he ; “ say nought about it.”

Until this time he had disguised his voice ; a deception which was much aided by his closed visor. Now, however, he resumed his natural tones ; as, drawing forth from his baldric a small white glove, he asked the trembling maiden, in accents which thrilled through her soul—

“ Know ye this guerdon, dear Guda?”

“ Yes, yes!” she shrieked, “ ’tis mine!—I gave it to him!”

It was with difficulty she sustained herself in the sight of the emperor.

“ That glove you gave to a poor knight of Richard’s army, and with it you gave your troth ;—where is he?”

“ Where is he?” she cried, echoing the monarch’s question : “ Where is he? Alas! alas!”

A flood of tears came to her relief; she hung down her head, and wept copiously.

“ Be comforted, fair Guda,” said Richard, soothingly.

In the meanwhile he had raised his visor, while the sorrowing maiden wept; and he now revealed to her view the hero of the tourney at Cologne, the chosen of Guda’s heart, as of the German people.

“ Weep no more, ladye—weep no more,” he continued ; “ your lover is here!—look up!—behold him!”

He advanced towards her—he took her hand.

“ ’Tis he! ’tis he!—my own, my lost one!” She fell on his neck, and fainted away with delight.

That was the joyfulest day that ever shone upon Caub.

In a week they were wedded; and Guda was Empress of Germany.

From thenceforth, in memory of this event, the name of the castle was changed from Caub, Cub, or Chub, to Gutenfels—the Rock of Guda.

Caub, which lies at the foot of the castle of Gutenfels, is believed to have been a Roman station in the earlier periods of the empire. The subsequent history of this town is the same as that of the castle of Gutenfels, the fate of which it uniformly shared. It was besieged by the Landgraf William of Hesse, with a division of the imperial army under his command, in the Bavarian war (A.D. 1504); but although he lay entrenched before the place for more than five weeks, he was eventually obliged to raise the siege and decamp with his forces. A rude rhyme, engraven on a large stone, still standing in the town, commemorates this event.* In the thirty years' war, Caub and Gutenfels were taken by the Swedes, under Gustavus Adolphus (A.D. 1633); and that hero abode there six days, for the purpose of superintending the passage of his army at that point of the Rhine. The

* It runs thus :—

“ Im jahr vom Christi Geburt man zahlt
 Fünfhundert und fier alt;
 Am Sonntag Mariä Himmelfahrt
 Ward Kaub sechs halb wochen belagart.
 Mit ganzer Macht und Heereskraft
 Durch Hessen die Landgrafschaft.
 Neun hundert stein gehauen
 Als ihr die Gröss ihr wohl beschauen
 Und neunhundertdreissigacht gegossen
 Seynd funden worden von ihm geschossen,
 Dazu die zerbrochen und verloren seyn
 Auch viiel versunken in den Rhein.
 Und wie wohl das schloss nit war erbauen
 Als es seit der zeit von nawen
 Von Pfalzgraf Ludwig ware befest,
 Noch dennoch müssen die frembde Gest
 Kaub bei der pfalz lassen bleiben,
 Das wir Gottes Gnaden zuschreiben,
 Und auch der wehrhaften Hand
 Dies behellt all Vaterland.”

passage of the river, at the same place, by the Russians and Prussians, under Blucher (A. D. 1814), has been already adverted to in the preceding article.

Like every other town on the Rhine in the middle ages, Caub was noted for the factiousness of its burghers, and the intestine commotions caused by them in their little community. But the history of one place is the history of almost all; and, having detailed those of Cologne and Coblenz, Boppard and Bonn, further reference to particulars, in this respect, is deemed unnecessary.

BACHARACH.—STAHLERCK.

Nearly mid-way in the Rhine, just opposite the town of Bacharach, is a small green island, containing about thirty acres of pasturage; and almost central between this island and the right bank of the river is a curious piece of rock, which is visible only when the water is very low. This rock is termed *Ara Bacchi* (Bacchus's Altar): and is supposed to be a monument consecrated to the wine-god in this, one of his most favoured districts. There are, however, many doubts as to the truth of this conjecture—for conjecture it is, and nothing more: and, notwithstanding the weight of authority in its favour, those who oppose it produce authority less suspicious on the whole. The chief ground on which its supporters rest their case is an unpublished manuscript, of an ancient date no doubt, but of a most apocryphal character also: * and the work of a local topographer and historian, † who seems to have taken more on trust than a writer on such subjects should receive. The former states, in reference to the question at issue, that, “in the year of the world 2060, Bacchus, king of Morae (*quære*, Morea?) was expelled by his rebellious subjects; and that, having acquired by fraud a portion of land on the Gallic bank of the Rhine, from the Allemanni, he there founded a small state, which he named *Aram Bacchi*. Subsequently to the birth of Christ, ages afterwards, this

* “*Antiquitates imperii primi ad Rhenum.*”

† Widder, “*Beschreibung der Pfalz.*”

STORY OF ST. WILFRED'S CHURCH, CAN.

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name, still retained by that spot, was corrupted into Bacharach, by Pharamund, king of the Franks, who built afresh the village which gave origin to the present town." The latter asserts, that "the town is designated Ara Bacchi, in the oldest official records of the Germanic empire at present in existence." But it is easy to perceive that the one is no authority; and as the other does not state this fact of his own knowledge, he is entitled to no greater credit. Some antiquarians believe the rock in the river was a portion of the island, on which a monument in honour of Bacchus had been erected by the Romans during their occupation of the Rhine: but these seem equally at fault with those who give it a Grecian origin. The most trustworthy writers who have treated the subject, state that the first mention made of the place is under the name of "the village of Bachrecha," in records of the earlier part of the twelfth century (A.D. 1119); and that it became a town of note in the middle ages, in consequence of its vicinity to the castle of Stahleck, then the residence of the pfalzgrafs, or princes palatine of the Middle Rhine. Vogt,* a high authority, is inclined to think that the cultivation of the rich and costly muscatel grape, for which this spot has long been celebrated, gave rise to the idea of allegorically naming the rocks on which they grew the Altar of Bacchus. It is more probable, however, that the name Bacharach is of Germano-Celtish origin, like Andernach, Hirzenach, and many others of a similar etymological construction. What adds greater weight to this probability is the fact that five brooks (German—Bach, singular; Bachen, plural), taking rise on the hills, have their confluence with the Rhine at this point. There is one circumstance, however, which should not be forgotten, in favour of the opposite opinion; and that is, that it was usual with the Romans to dedicate rocks in rivers, and even in the sea, to certain deities; and that no place was so likely to be selected by them, for the purpose of honouring the god of the grape, as this where his choicest productions take birth and abound.

In the middle ages, Bacharach was the wine-market of the Rhine-Gau; and the greatest part of the produce of that famous

* "Rheinische Gesch. u. Sag."

spot was deposited in the merchants' cellars of the town. Hence, perhaps, the high reputation of the wine sold here ; hence also, it may be, the passion of the Emperor Wenceslaus for it ;* hence the *penchant* of Eneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius the Second, who had four butts of it annually sent to him to Rome ; and hence too, in all likelihood, the origin of the well-known rhymes,—

“ Zu Hochheim am Main,
Zu Würzburg am Stein,
Zu Bacharach am Rhein,
Da Wachsen die drei besten wein.” †

The ruins of the little church, which are to be seen in this town, were originally erected in honour of Werner, the murdered child,—the legend of whose death has been already related in these pages. Mr. Hope truly terms it “a fairy fabric, the remains of the highest and most elegant lancet style existing.” They are, indeed, most beautiful to behold. St. Werner, it will be recollected, was a native of Bacharach.

The imposing ruins of the once almost impregnable castle of Stahleck, crown the summit of the hill which overtops Bacharach.

The origin of the castle of Stahleck is lost in the obscurity of the earlier portion of the middle ages. It was most probably built on the ruins of one of the fifty Roman forts, erected by Drusus, to overawe the Allemanni, and command the Rhine. Tradition, however, ascribes it to the Huns, at the period when they occupied this part of the Roman empire. But the first authentic record of its existence dates only in the latter end of the twelfth century. At that era (1290) it appears to have been a fortress of great strength, and considerable celebrity,

* Vide Rhens and Oberlahnstein.

† Thus rendered :—

“ At Hochheim on the Mayn,
At Würzburg by Stein,
At Bacharach on the Rhine,
Grow the best wine.”

among the lordly castles which studded both banks of the Rhine ; and to have formed the residence of the noble family of Stahleck, once princes palatine of the Rhine, who made it their head-quarters, as it lay central in their extensive possessions on each side of the river.

THE PALATINE'S DISGRACE.

The first of this family who attained the rank of prince palatine (pfalzgraf), was Hermann von Stahleck, nephew of Conrad the Third, the first German emperor of the noble house of Hohenstaufen, A.D. 1148-49. He was a man of singular prudence and conduct, and of courage equal to both : so high, indeed, did he stand in his uncle's opinion, that he appointed him, in his absence on the second crusade, one of the vicars of the empire, and left him unlimited power over his kingdom. But ambition, "the vice of noble souls," overpowered his gratitude to his uncle, and his allegiance to his sovereign. He assumed that, as pfalzgraf of the Rhine, he was the legitimate heir to the property and possessions of the dukes of the Rhine-franc — or Franconia — who had preceded him in the dignity ; and as the stock of that princely race became extinct in the person of Henry the Fifth (A.D. 1125), he prepared, in that character, to enter on their occupation, and to vindicate what he asserted to be right. He had, however, an opposition to contend with, which was

much more formidable in those days than any armed force :— the greater portion of what he claimed was in the hands of the church ; and the bishops, and abbots, and deans, and chapters, felt no desire to relinquish what they held, or acknowledge any claim which would deprive them of it. Yet Hermann did not want friends either ; for many of the nobles and knights who had accompanied the crusaders were bitter foes of the clergy : hating them for their all-grasping avarice ; fearing them for their absorbing power and extravagant pretensions ; despising them for the lowliness of their birth and their pacific calling ; and scorning them for their luxury, their profligacy, and their irreligion. Among those who entertained these feelings the strongest, were the knights and barons on the banks of the Rhine ; and when the pfalzgraf proposed to dispossess the church of this property, it is not greatly to be wondered at that many of the most powerful among them took a decided part in the project. The hope of adding to their own a portion of that wrested from foes they so much dreaded, despised, and disliked, it may be added, formed no slight inducement to their adoption of this course. Accordingly, we find leagued with Hermann, in his equivocal expedition, the Counts of Leiningen, Sponheim, Kirchberg, Deidesheim, Katzenellenbogen, Nidda, and a host of others of inferior name and note, all ready and anxious to abase the pride of the hierarchy, and enrich themselves at the expense of the ecclesiastical acquisitions. Their army amounted to a very considerable force ; and assumed a still more formidable aspect from the circumstance of its being commanded by captains, old crusaders, experienced in all the warlike strategy of Europe and Asia at that period.

Their first overt act was an incursion into the territory of the archdiocese of Treves. In the course of that movement they made themselves masters of the strong castle of Treis,* together with several towns and fortified places ; and advanced as close to Treves itself as Pfalzel.† There, in a council convoked by Hermann, as generalissimo of the invaders, claim was made by him, as successor of the Rhenish dukes,

* On the Moselle, at a considerable distance from Treves.

† Within a league of Treves.

to the most profitable portion of the archiepiscopal possessions, inclusive of the command of the Moselle, from Treves to its junction with the Rhine. Adalbert von Monstreuil, previously bishop of Metz, a wise and a discreet man, much beloved by his subjects, was then archbishop of Triers. To the requisition of the invaders he gave no direct answer; but actively set about collecting a large body of men in secret, to regain, if possible, possession of Treis. When all his preparations were completed, he suddenly advanced to the attack of the castle. At the moment fortune seemed altogether in his favour; for the forces of the confederation were spread over various parts of the country, confident in their strength and unsuspecting of any attempt against their overwhelming numbers. The castle, which had been strongly fortified by Hermann, held out, however, beyond the expectations of the assailants, and gave him sufficient time to collect together and concentrate his scattered power. He then marched, in two divisions, on the ecclesiastical troops; and succeeded in reaching them before they had been able to effect the capture of Treis. The invaders outnumbered the forces of the church by three to one; and the archbishop was well aware of the deadly enmity with which their leaders regarded him; but his ability came to his aid at the moment it was most wanting, and not alone carried him through this difficulty without danger, but also bore him triumphantly over his enemies' necks to the object of his solicitude. It was, in truth, a master-stroke of policy that which he at once resolved on, and which, with as little delay, he immediately carried into execution. Forming his slender force into a double line, with two fronts facing each other for the moment, he proceeded slowly down the ranks clothed in full pontificals, bearing in one hand a crucifix, in the other the archiepiscopal banner. In this guise he addressed his little band as follows:—

“ Friends of the blessed St. Peter, fear nothing; your patron will protect you from all danger. He is now standing beside us, at the head of a heavenly host, ready to assist and destroy the enemies of the holy church. On this sacred emblem (the crucifix) did the false pfalzgraf swear to be the shield of the church; but, alas! he hath forsworn himself to God and man.

He shall soon see it like a meteor in the thick of the battle—it shall be the signal of the Lord's vengeance in his eyes. On, my brave soldiers!—you fight for your God, your faith, and your pastor. Who dies, shall be the companion of the saints; who lives, shall be the heirs of eternal glory. I absolve you of all your sins. Heaven defend the right."

This done, he consigned the ecclesiastical banner to the charge of the Count of Namur; and, armed alone with the crucifix, he took his place in advance of the foremost rank. Whether it was that his words were conveyed to the ears of the pfalzgraf's forces, or that there were traitors among them, is not now known; but certain it is that, all of a sudden, a panic flight seized on them all. Just as the archbishop, in a voice of thunder, gave the command to attack, a cry of defeat and distress arose at once among his opponents.

"See! see!" was shouted from all quarters; "the archangel Michael, and the host of heaven, are rushing on us. Fly! fly! fly!"

And fly they did, to such purpose that, before a blow was struck, the face of the country was covered with fugitives; and the pfalzgraf, and his noble and knightly confederates, stood on the battle-field, almost alone. They, too, seeing no hope of rallying the faitours, fled likewise. The earth was strewn with arms and munitions of war, cast away to prevent any impediment to this base retreat. To increase their confusion and dismay, the panic was communicated to the troops in the castle of Treis; and an hour had scarcely elapsed when it was vacated by them also, and the archbishop, at the head of his victorious little band, was in possession of its fortifications. The pfalzgraf took refuge in his own principality; where, within the then impregnable walls of Stahleck, though apparently quiet, he meditated future incursions on the clerical territory, and an ample revenge for his discomfiture and disgrace.

Adalbert, however, did not long survive this victory: he died in a few months after; and he was succeeded in the see of Treves by Hillin, a peaceful priest. Hillin was averse to war by nature and from principle; he was a pious, good man, in short, who desired to live in peace and goodwill with all his fellow-creatures.

To this end, he proposed a treaty of alliance with the pfalzgraf and his associates ; and Frederic Barbarossa, who had just then assumed the imperial dignity (A. D. 1152), having undertaken the office of mediator, it was ratified in due form by all the parties. But Hillin, though anxious to make every reasonable sacrifice for peace' sake, as became his profession, was not unmindful that the best way to ensure its continuance was to be always prepared for war. He, therefore, replenished his armories and arsenals ; he re-edified the old castles, and erected new ones on the most important points of his territory ; and, above all, he strengthened and extended the works of Ehrenbreitstein, then, as now, one of the strongest fortresses in Europe.* Having done this, he obtained, from the hands of the emperor himself, a confirmation of his dignity as archbishop, prince of Treves ; a recognition of his independence ; and an acknowledgment of his rights.

That in doing this he did well, was shewn by the course of subsequent events ; which clearly proved that his political foresight was co-equal with his wisdom, his piety, and his love of peace.

During the absence of the emperor in Italy, to quell an insurrection in the Milanese (A. D. 1154), the pfalzgraf and his confederates once more took up arms against the spiritual princes of the empire. They did not now, however, attempt to attack the territories of the archbishop of Treves,—thanks to the providence of Hillin : but they turned their irresistible arms on those of the archbishops of Worms and Speyers ; and Mainz was shortly threatened with the same fate.

The archbishop of Mainz at this period, was Arnold von Seelenhofen, a proud, vain, quarrelsome prelate, well known throughout Europe, for the pomp and luxury of his court ; and hated not only by the citizens of Mainz for his oppression and extortion, but even by the very canons of his own cathedral—the very priests of his own altars. Yet much as they hated him, and much as he had reason to fear them, he hated and feared much more than either, or both, the lawless pfalzgraf, whom neither religion nor politics could bind to peacefulness with the

* The great cistern, from which the garrison is still supplied with water, was excavated by his order, and under his superintendence.

clerical powers, his neighbours. But Arnold was as bold as well as a bad man; and, therefore, on the first intelligence of the invasion of the adjacent ecclesiastical territories he excommunicated Herman and all his followers. The ban of the church was then an awful punishment; but the ambitious pfalzgraf, heeded it not; neither did his friends or his forces. Immediately that he was informed of this fact, he concentrated his troops and entered on the territory of Mainz. The archbishop, finding spiritual arms unavailing, had recourse to temporal ones; but still the power of his opponent was far too great for the small force he could array in his defence. He was ignominiously driven back from post to post, until at last he had only the city of Mainz left him of all his ample possessions; and of that place he was any thing but confident, from the well-known animosity of its citizens to his sovereignty. The whole archdiocese was wasted by fire and sword; and a very large portion of the best part of it was appropriated by the pfalzgraf to his supporters and followers.

This devastating and destructive strife continued for two years longer; and it had reached its greatest height of horror and distress, when the emperor returned from Italy, A.D. 1156. The awful prospect which met this prince's view excited him to the last degree of anger. He was enraged with all parties: with the archbishop of Mainz, for daring to put a prince of the empire under the ban of the church without his permission; with the pfalzgraf, for his unjustifiable invasion of the territories of Worms and Speyers; and with the feudatories of the empire—the one for taking part in the quarrel,—the others for remaining still. But Frederic was as good as well as a great monarch; and he, therefore, determined to do justice without fear or favour in this heavy cause. An imperial diet was immediately convoked at Worms, for the purpose of hearing and judging the delinquents on both sides; and all the principals and accessories to the fact were summoned thither, to appear before that high tribunal. Hermann and Arnold were in attendance; and each pleaded as though the right was on his side: but the diet thought otherwise; and it pronounced them both guilty. The emperor, then, in full convocation of all the princes, nobles, and knights of the empire, adjudged them to the most infamous punishment that could be inflicted on their rank—to carry a dog on their

shoulders.* The pfalzgraf, and ten of the highest in station among his confederates on this occasion, were actually obliged to submit to this last degradation in the eyes of the German people; the archbishop, however, was excused on account of his great age; but his chief vassals were compelled to perform it in his stead.

Pale, wan, and wo-begone, broken in spirit, and prostrated beyond all hope of upraising, Hermann, his punishment endured, returned once more to Stahleck. Bowed down with this degradation he seemed like the stately oak rent by the lightning, and reft of all its leafy honours by the tempest. Equally dejected, his faithful esquires and retainers followed him to his now desolate and dishonoured home. They reached the castle; but its rugged walls were no longer vocal with welcome; and its solitary halls no more resounded with the music of triumph and of joy. All was desert, all was sad; for sadness sat within the breasts of those who had once made the scene mirthful; and disgrace had converted their feelings into a barren waste. Feasting was at an end, and wassail was known no more in Stahleck. A dark cloud hung over its noble chief, and obscured the hearts of all his dependants.

The pfalzgraf passed a few days in his chamber unseen by any one; he then came forth with a calm, clear brow, and ascended the highest turret of the castle. Resolution was in his eye; on his stern countenance sat determination. He gazed long and wistfully on the fair prospect before him; he looked at the broad, bright river, bounding onwards in its course, full of

* This singular punishment was derived from the Scandinavian ancestors of the Germans; though it was adopted and continued by their conquerors, the Franks and the Saxons, to a very late period. It was the last degradation to which a prince, or noble, or knight, could be subjected; and it inflicted a virtual loss of rank with perpetual infamy. The crimes for which it was adjudged were the capital ones of public disturbance, breach of the peace of the empire, tyrannous government, or any proceeding, in short, which had for its object and end the destruction or injury of public order, public quiet, or public safety. Herrmann ("Allgemeinen Weltgeschichte") says, "the free were compelled to carry a cur-dog—the feudatory, or vassal, a stool or chair—and the peasant, a plough-wheel (*quere*, plough-share?) on their shoulders to the bounds of the next county or lordship, and endure patiently every insult offered them the while they bore it."

beauty in its birth—full of glory in its maturity—and he likened it to his own fate.

“It will finish in a swamp,” thought he; “and I, how shall be my end? Oh, far more inglorious! I shall die with the brand of disgrace on my name:—yes, that is the only thing I shall transmit to posterity which will not be forgotten.”

He sighed deeply as he spoke; and then gazed again as though his eyes would drink in every feature in the landscape. It was as if a man should look on the open grave of a friend: that look was his last. He descended to the principal hall, and summoned all his retainers around him. A sad and silent group they formed, as he stood on the dais of that spacious chamber, and thus addressed them, solemnly and slowly.

“My friends,” he spoke, “here are my treasures of gold and of silver. I bestow them all on you, as a requital of your faithful services to me and to my house—may they make you happy.”

Sobs and tears—ay, tears from the eyes of the grim soldiers and bearded men who surrounded him—were the only thanks offered for these rich gifts.

“I leave you,” continued he, his voice almost suffocated with sighs; “I leave you for ever.”

“Oh, no! no! no!” cried the weeping warriors; “leave us not; what shall we do without you?”

“I leave you for ever,” he went on; apparently unheeding this wild burst of natural sorrow, so lost he seemed in his own thoughts. “I leave you—the friends of my youth—the sharers in my dangers. I leave the home of my fathers—the home where I was born;—for dishonour has set its mark on me; and where I live, there do disgrace and degradation dwell also. I go to the depths of the solitary woods; where never more shall I mix in the affairs of this world; to pass the remainder of this life in penitential preparation for the next.”

His followers would fain have spoken in dissuasion of this resolution; but he waved his hand majestically, and said—

“Nay, never say a word on it; my resolve has been some-while taken. God keep you. Farewell.”

They then separated, sorrowing, and with heavy hearts. His followers soon found a new master; but never a one that they

loved so well as they did Hermann von Stahleck. He sought a refuge in the Hartz forest; and there, in the guise of a pious hermit, ended his days, it is to be hoped, in peace. His titles died with him, as he left no direct descendants.

Arnold von Seelenhofen, archbishop of Mainz, his great enemy, finished his troubled career in a much more fearful manner. Every day the hate of his subjects had increased; but it became considerably aggravated by his disgrace before the emperor and the Germanic diet. At this juncture he found, or fancied, a necessity for a journey to Rome; and to that effect he imposed an additional tax on the citizens of Mainz, which was levied under circumstances of peculiar harshness and atrocity. His ancient enemies, among whom were some of the neighbouring nobility, availed themselves of this opportunity; a conspiracy was at once formed; and every thing was speedily organised to carry it into effect. A tumultuous mob, excited by their leaders, hastened to the ecclesiastical palace and set it on fire; they then proceeded to plunder and burn the houses of all the clergy known as abettors and supporters of the archbishop; the rich treasure of the see, which was secured in the cathedral, was also seized by them, and appropriated to their own lawless purposes. This tumult was only appeased by the interposition of the emperor; who marched from Worms at the head of a powerful force;—re-instated Arnold in his dignity; and compelled, at his solicitation, the richer citizens to make good the loss which had been sustained by the church, the clergy, and himself. The humane Barbarossa could not, however, be persuaded to punish the rioters further; though the archbishop repeatedly urged him to greater severity towards them. The heads of the conspiracy alone were banished: all the rest were spared.

But the storm only slept—it was not over. No sooner had the imperial forces vacated the city, than a fresh conspiracy was set on foot: the ringleaders of the former returned from banishment; and a fierce mob was once more organised, ready for every outrage. Arnold was not altogether ignorant of these proceedings; but, with an infatuation which it is difficult to account for, he remained inactive,—nay, he affected to despise their efforts.

“Turn ye to the Lord,” wrote the celebrated prophetess

Hildegard, abbess of Rupertsberg to him, in a letter yet extant; "leave the paths of the wicked; for the end of your days is at hand."

The answer of Arnold (also preserved) is characteristic at once of his firmness and his folly. He thus replied to the pious nun's really prophetic warnings:—

"The people of Mainz are dogs; they bark, but don't bite. I fear them not; for I despise them."

To which the prophetess promptly rejoined in another missive, the last he ever received from her—

"Yea, they are chained dogs now: but, beware — they will break their chains yet and tear you to pieces, or you heed not."

Thus ended this strange correspondence.

Arnold, however, took up his abode soon after in a distant part of his archbishopric; and for a long while subsequent to the outbreak which has been just narrated, he never ventured his person within the walls of Mainz. But, overruled by his pride, and, perhaps, prompted by the secret agents of his enemies, he determined once more to make a triumphal entry into that city. Accompanied by a pompous crowd of useless followers, he approached it in state; and, to give sufficient time for preparation, took up his residence for the night in the monastery of St. Jacobsberg, then without the city walls. It was his last night on this earth. The abbot, whom he believed to be one of the truest of his friends, was, in reality, his bitterest foe, and a moving power at the bottom of every conspiracy that had ever existed against him; and, accordingly, the fullest information of his strength, and of all his proceedings, was at once despatched to the conspirators. The order was quickly given to their followers to assemble at various points of the city when night fell, and to be prepared with arms and munitions of war for the assault of the abbey, and the destruction of the archbishop. Thousands were at their respective posts at the hour appointed; the principal citizens of Mainz were among the number; and also many of the neighbouring knights and nobles. They marched silently to their destination; and drew up around it in such close order that no one could escape. The attack then commenced; they assailed the edifice at all quarters; and every accessible point was stormed by sanguinary

crowds thirsting for the blood of their foe. The noise, the tumult, the confusion of the fray—the whizzing of arrows—the hissing of fire-brands—the clash of arms and armour, aroused the archbishop from a troubled sleep. He saw, at once, his danger; and he essayed to escape: but there was no outlet through which even a mouse could pass unnoticed. The great gates of the abbey were quickly forced: every cell was filled with the infuriated populace. He was soon seized; and his death was dreadful. He was torn to pieces by the mob.

What further happened is not within the province of this work to notice.

L O R C H.

On the right bank of the Rhine lies Lorch, certainly one of the most ancient places on the river. It was known in the time of the Romans as *Lauriacum*; that people having had a strong military post there. The first red wine known on the Rhine is said to have been made in Lorch, or Lorrich as it was termed in the middle ages. The town stands at the entrance of a narrow valley, named the Wisper-Thal, or Whisper-Dale, from a little river called the Wisp, or Visp, which runs through it. The remains of the castle of Nollingen rise on the rugged hill over Lorch, at one side of it; and on the opposite side stands the precipitous miniature mountain of the Kedrich, better known by the popular appellation of “The Devil’s Ladder.” Lorch is, therefore, the focus of legends and traditions of the “olden times.” The following are those most generally diffused in the neighbourhood.

THE WHISPER-DELL.

Behind Lorch lies a wild, lonely dell, which was once without a single inhabitant, and contains even now only a few wretched hovels. It is called the Whisper-Dell. A melancholy brook, named the Whisper, steals sadly through it, and adds considerably to the dreary aspect it always wears. In old times it was reckoned dangerous for travellers to pass through

this dell. Few escaped, it was said, without receiving injury, or annoyance of some kind or other, from the evil spirits who haunted it ; and many who made the attempt were never known to return. It is now some four centuries since three youths, the sons of wealthy merchants, residing in Nürnberg, were on a journey of pleasure along the banks of the Rhine. Hearing in their inn at Lorch of the wonders of the Whisper-Dell, they resolved to visit it and explore its mysteries. They immediately set about accomplishing their resolution ; and proceeded forthwith to the entrance of this gloomy dell. It was then a perfect wilderness ; the bottom almost a swamp ; the rugged rocks on each side overhung with shrubs, which nearly excluded the light of day ; while hither and thither, lying on the earth, masses of stone, clumps of brushwood, or piles of fallen trees, nearly impeded all progress, and made advance well-nigh impracticable. These bold youths were not, however, to be deterred ; and in their instance, as well as in most others, determination to conquer overcame every obstacle. For a long hour they struggled bravely : at the end of that period they reached a huge, rugged, scarped rock, which stretched quite across the narrow, dark ravine where they found themselves, and put a stop to their journey further in that direction. This rock, however, was in itself a curiosity to see, well worth all the pains that they had taken. It looked like an immense castle ; had towers, and bastions, and battlements ; donjon, and moat, and outworks ; and, to increase the resemblance still more, high above were perforated several of those pointed Gothic windows, the same as are seen in a cathedral, or in some others of the more magnificent castellated edifices of the kind which still exist. The youths gazed on the sight with astonishment and awe ; and then they looked at one another as though they sought for an explanation of the wonder. While thus occupied, they were startled with a sound, still commonly used in Germany as a means of attracting attention.

“ Bst, bst, bst,” sibillated in rapid succession above their heads. “ Bst, bst, bst.”

They looked up ; and lo ! from one of the pointed windows peeped three of the most beautiful female faces they ever beheld. Eyes like diamonds ; cheeks like roses ; complexions like a lily ;

and hair, glossy and black as the raven's wing, were their least attractions.

"Bst, bst, bst," again echoed sweetly from their lovely lips, while they nodded and smiled at the youths, eagerly beckoning them, at the same time, up to their bower.

"This is not so bad as we were told," said one of the young men to the others.

"They may weary of waiting for us," observed the second.

"Let us lose no time, but go up to them at once," cried the third.

"Let us go up to them at once," exclaimed all together.

"Bst, bst, bst," once more sibillated the sweet lips above them; and again,

"Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,"

were in active requisition.

The fascinated youths sought anxiously around for an entrance; and at length discovered one in the shape of a single narrow door, concealed in a corner of the rock. They entered. A long passage presented itself, which they traversed quickly; after pursuing their way in darkness for a few minutes, they encountered a stone staircase. This they ascended, and in due time arrived at, what seemed to their eyes, a spacious ante-chamber. But the darkness which filled it was so dense that it was quite impossible to distinguish any object: they could not even see one another; and they felt no small degree of alarm at the situation in which they had placed themselves. However, they set about exploring the apartment by creeping close to the walls, sounding them in the circuit they contrived to make of it in that manner. After some time spent in this operation, one of them stumbled against a door, which immediately flew open to his touch. A blaze of light gushed through the aperture; and a single glance within shewed a magnificent room, illumined by thousands of tapers, which completely dazzled their eyes to look on. They entered with some hesitation, and found themselves in a hall of the most ample dimensions. The sides of this room were formed at intervals of a combination of mirrors, reaching from the floor to the roof: the ceiling also was composed of the same brilliant materials, arranged in the same manner. Between

each interval in the mirrors was fixed a splendid chandelier, with numerous lights burning brightly in it; and from the roof depended others of greater magnitude, blazing with the most intense lustre. The three maidens whom they had seen in the window from without, now stood in the centre of this noble apartment, looking like young queens, so glorious and lovely did they appear to the youthful fancies of their admirers. The hearts of the young men beat audibly with passion and pleasure.

"Welcome! welcome! welcome!" exclaimed the maidens all together; and they reached forth their little white hands in the most kindly way to their visitors. The youths rushed forward to clasp them, as youths, under the same circumstances, always should do: but, behold! instead of three, there seemed three hundred maidens in the apartment, each reaching forth her fair hand, and smiling sweetly on the love-smit lads. They were puzzled at this appearance; and they stood in amaze for a moment to think what it portended. It was but the reflection of the mirrors. The three damsels then laughed aloud, till the room rung again, at the blunder of the boys; who hung down their heads, and looked quite confounded at their own folly. A narrow door now opened in a niche or alcove of the hall, and a venerable old man, clothed in black, flowing garments, tall and noble-looking, with long, gray hair, and snow-white beard, came forth. He approached the youths, and thus addressed them:—

"You are welcome here to woo my daughters. I am no merchant—no huxter—no higgler;—and I shall, therefore, drive no hard bargain with you on the score of fortune. A thousand pounds' weight of gold shall be the dowry of each; and you can have it at once, if you wish to marry them."

The maidens laughed still louder than before; while the astonished youths were quite at a loss what to say or to do in this dilemma.

"Let each of you take her he likes best," resumed the old man; but he spake now in a voice of thunder, which echoed through the castle, and shook the hearts of the youths.

They advanced towards the maidens trembling with the apprehension of some undefined danger; but when they put out

their hands to clasp them, they only struck against the mirrors. The old man laughed hollowly, and, to them, horribly, and said,—

“ I will guide you to your brides.”

He then took them in turn, and led them each to one of the maidens. Notwithstanding the fear that they had just felt, and the perfect consciousness of dread and danger which still existed in their breasts, they all three ardently embraced the damsels, and gave themselves up, heart and soul, to the fascination of their society. The power of beauty is irresistible.

“ I give you permission to kiss your brides,” said the old man.

The panting youths did not wait for a renewal of the permission. They kissed and clasped his fair daughters with all the passionate intensity of their years ; and, as usual, found themselves every moment more and more befooled. Still they were perfectly conscious of some preternatural influence.

“ You must now give me a proof of your love for my lasses,” said the old man.

“ We are ready and willing to do any thing to prove it,” exclaimed the youths. “ What shall it be ? What do you desire ? ”

“ Last night my girls lost their three pet birds—the one a starling, the other a raven, and the third a magpie,” resumed the old man.

“ Let us haste to find them,” cried the impetuous youths.

“ It is probable,” continued he, “ that they are perched somewhere in the wood ; perhaps, together on the same tree —— ”

“ Come ! come ! ” cried the eager boys, impatiently ; “ come ! come ! we’ll soon find them.”

“ You may recognise them by these marks and tokens,” proceeded the gray-beard : “ the starling repeats a riddle ; the raven sings a little song ; and the magpie tells a story about her grandmother, immediately they are accosted by any one. Ask them to do so.”

The youths, all impatience, besought permission to enter at once on their search.

“ Go, my brave bridegrooms,” concluded the old man ; “ go, and bring back with you the three dear little favourites.

They are quite tame, and will easily allow themselves to be taken."

Forth went the impetuous boys, full of their fair maidens' charms, burning to return to them with their lost favourites. About a quarter of an hour spent in the wood discovered to them the objects of their search. The three lost birds sat perched side by side on the limb of an uprooted oak, which lay prostrate on the ground, like an overthrown giant. The youths were glad at heart; for now they deemed the prize won.

"Starling! starling!" said one of them to that bird, "repeat your riddle—repeat your riddle."

The starling flapped its wings, flew on his shoulder, and spake as follows:—

"Say, what in thy face may be,
Yet may you but in mirror see?"

"Raven! raven!" said the second of the youths, "sing us thy song—sing us thy song."

The raven croaked, and shook his glossy sides; and then, in rather a hoarse tone of voice, with much of the manner of his tribe, sang these verses to an indescribable kind of tune:—

"In Utopia once did journey,
On an ass, fat parsons three,
There roast birds, where'er you'd turn ye,
To their very teeth did flee;
Yet not a one could they snap of them all,
For the birds were too big, or their mouths were too small.

Rated this the parsons soundly
Turned they soon to fatherland,
In Utopia swore they roundly
Nothing can men understand:
For, troth, if they did, their roast birds they'd have small,
Or their mouths big enough for what to them might fall."

When the raven had concluded, he flapped his wings also; then flew over to the second youth, and perched on the crown of his head.

"Magpie! magpie!" said the third, "tell us the story about your grandmother—tell us that story."

The magpie couched on her breast, and began :—

“ My grandmother was a magpie, and she laid eggs, and from them she hatched other magpies ; and if she is not dead, she lives still.”

This done, she sprang on the youth's hand, and sat there very composedly.

Not a little pleasure was experienced by the adventurous boys, that the trial of their love for the old man's fair daughters was so soon ended, and the only obstacle to their union so easily removed. They hastened back as fast as their legs could carry them to the rock-castle where dwelt the maidens. It was night before they reached it. Once again they entered by the narrow doorway at which they had gone in before ; and proceeded along the same passages to the same apartment where they had so lately been dazzled with light and loveliness. But there was now no longer a trace of either to be discovered. The lights were fled ; the mirrors were not visible ; and, worse than all, there were no signs to be seen of the beautiful creatures who had so captivated them, anywhere. The hall was, in fact, totally divested of all its garniture. The walls which formerly reflected every object a hundred-fold were now rugged and bare ; and the vaulted roof looked damp, and dismal, and dreary, patched with mildew, and green, and black, where it could be distinguished in the “ dim obscure ” which prevailed over all. They gazed around them in silence ; sad forebodings filled their breasts. In three niches of this desolate apartment stood three small tables, covered with rich meats and a variety of rare wines ; at each of these sat a withered, shrivelled, toothless, paralytic, old hag, shaking as with the palsy. As the youths entered, all three arose, and held forth their skinny hands to be kissed, as ladies are wont to do with their lovers.

“ Ah ! ah ! ah ! ” gabbled they all together, in croaking tones, and attenuated, cracked, treble voices ;—“ ah ! ah ! ah ! dear, dear bridegrooms, come and kiss us once more—come and embrace us.”

They sprung on the youths, like cats, clasped them closely to their withered bosoms, and held them there so firmly, that they almost despaired of ever being able to get free. All the while they overwhelmed them with their disgusting caresses, and

made them almost loathe themselves for their compelled permission. This done, they began to chatter, and clatter, and shriek, and scream, and laugh, like so many devils. Their winged favourites, too, joined actively in the uproarious chorus. The starling repeated his riddle, the raven sang his song, and the magpie told the story about his grandmother. It was a most riotous scene. Not a single syllable could be heard distinctly ; such was the confusion of tongues, and the babble of voices. The hags then seized each an arm of the youths, with a gripe like that of a blacksmith's vice, and dragged, rather than led them, to the three tables. Having seated themselves, they next pulled the hapless lads down beside them ; and immediately began to banquet as gaily as if they were all loveliness and love. Their tongues, however, still ran on in an unceasing clatter ; now urging their unhappy victims to partake of what stood before them in such profusion ; then playing off the coquetries of "sweet seventeen," in the most ludicrous manner ; anon, dwelling with ridiculous raptures on the golden days in store for them, and the unalloyed pleasures which all parties would enjoy—loving and beloved—in their lonely rock-castle. The three birds, too, kept up a continual chorus, each making the greatest noise he could, after his own fashion, and thus increasing a hundred-fold the confusion which prevailed. To crown all, every corner of the spacious apartment seemed to possess a multifold echo ; for each sound came back on the bewildered senses of the boys, as though repeated with increased intensity a hundred times told. Although the poor fellows felt neither hunger, nor thirst, nor love, nor joy, they allowed themselves to be persuaded to partake of some sparkling wine by their tormentors. A rich beaker of generous Hocheimer was presented to them ; and they drank off its contents, as much in despair as through desire. Scarce had they finished it, however, when a deep sleep suddenly fell upon them. They lost their senses at once, and sunk powerless to the ground.

The sun was already high in the heavens when they awoke. A few moments informed them of their position, as well as recalled to their recollections the events of the preceding night. They found themselves lying in a marshy thicket, amidst dense, stunted brushwood, at the foot of a scarped rock, which towered

precipitously far above them. It was with much difficulty they could find footing in the morass where they lay; and still more trouble was experienced by them before they could discover any path out of this unpleasant position. At last they succeeded in extricating themselves; and, full of shame, and bitterness, and regret at their own folly, they traversed the remaining portion of the dell towards Lorch. As they proceeded, however, their feelings of self-torment were increased at every step; for, on all sides, from cliff and cave, from tree, and bush, and briar, nay, even in the very squash of the quagmire which they trod on, they seemed to hear the cursed sibillation, "Bst, bst, bst—bst, bst, bst;" while at every turn of the dingle they thought they saw in each jutting crag the hideous faces of the old fiends, their late brides, grinning ghastly at them, and making as though they would again clasp them to their horrid bosoms. To increase their mortification, at the entrance of the dell sat, perched on a blasted witch-elm, their old friends, the three pet birds; and again were the hapless youths compelled to hear the starling repeat his riddle, the raven sing his song, and the magpie tell the story about his grandmother. In a few minutes, however, they gained the open country on the banks of the river, and there meeting a peasant going to his early morning labour, they pointed out to him the three birds, and asked him what the cursed creatures meant?

"If you will not feel offended with me, gentlemen," answered the peasant, "I will tell you."

They assured him they would not; and he thus proceeded:—

"The riddle repeated by the starling relates to your nose; which, though right in front of your face, you cannot see without the aid of a mirror."——

The youths shrugged their shoulders, and looked very silly.

"The raven by his song inculcates the principle, that it is safer to catch roast birds with the hand than with the mouth."——

A bitter laugh followed this explanation.

"And as for the magpie, he only tells you a tale which you must all have heard many and many a time, over and over again, from your grandmother, and which you will tell to your grandchildren, if you ever have any.—Good morning, sirs."

The crest-fallen youths looked exceedingly foolish at this piece of intelligence, and seemed ready to eat their very nails for vexation. They shortly reached their inn; and there swore, by all they held sacred and dear, never again to attend to a "bst," even though it were uttered by the sweetest lips in the world.

This is the legend of the Whisper Dell: but there are many others besides, which are irrelevant to the present purpose of these pages.

THE DEVIL'S LADDER.

To the Kedrich, commonly called the "Devil's Ladder," appertains the legend which succeeds; it has also some connexion with the castle of Nollingen, whose ruins frown above Lorch at the entrance of the Whisper-Dell.

Yon is Nollingen; behind it is the Kedrich, the steepest part of which is called to this day the Devil's Ladder; below it is Lorch. The story of it runs thus:—

In Nollingen, ages long ago, ere the hand of time had crumbled it into the ruin it now is, dwelt, in all the pomp and pride of Rhenish chivalry, the noble Knight Sibbo von Lorch. He was a brave man in battle; but he was of a bitter spirit; and he was inhospitable at a period and in a state of society when hospitality was deemed one of the highest virtues of human nature, because one of those which was most constantly required to be in active operation. Like "Jephtha, king of Israel," he had "one fair daughter, and no more," the which he loved passing well. She was just twelve years of age, and a perfect beauty. His wife had long been in her grave.

One night in mid-winter, while the tempest howled round the turrets of the castle, and swept fearfully over the face of the troubled waters of the river, a loud knocking was heard at the outer gate; and, immediately after, the voice of the warder was audible in high altercation with some stranger. Sir Sibbo went forth himself to see what it could mean, and found a little old man, of the smallest conceivable stature, in contention with that official, who refused him what he sought—shelter for the night, and refreshment in the castle.

"Here is your lord, now," grumbled the little old creature,

as Sir Sibbo made his appearance, "and he'll have you all whipped, you saucy dogs, for disgracing his name, by refusing hospitality to a belated and wayworn traveller in such a dreary night as this is!"

But he had altogether calculated without his host. Sir Sibbo, on hearing the cause of the riot, overwhelmed the poor, little man, with reproaches, and ordered his domestics to drive him forthwith from the gate of the castle. It was done with right good-will by the irritated menials.

"I'll remember this to you, Sir Knight," were the only words the old man said, as he hurried off before the whips of the warders could catch him.

Sir Sibbo thought nothing further of the threat, but retired to rest at his wonted hour, forgetful that the circumstance had ever occurred, so little importance did he attach to it. Next morning, however, as he descended from his chamber to the banquetting-hall, he was aware of the greatest confusion among his vassals and retainers; some were hurrying one way, some another; "upstairs, downstairs, in my lady's chamber," as the old song says. He asked the cause of the first he came to, but he received no answer; he seized on a second, but could only get a shake of the head in reply; a third, however, whom he threatened to run through the body, if he did not explain the mystery, told all. His daughter—his pride, his hope, his joy—was gone; no one knew where, or how, or whither. He was, as it were, thunderstruck; sensation seemed at an end for a long space of time. When he recovered, however, messengers in search of the missing child were despatched in all directions; and, at the head of a numerous body of his retainers, he set forth himself on the same expedition. Every corner of the country was traversed; every cranny of the rocks was examined; every ravine in the vicinity was explored: but all in vain. No trace of the lost one, living or dead, could be discovered with all their efforts. Seven days had thus elapsed; the strictness of the search was relaxed; and Sir Sibbo had returned to Nollingen, where he sat disconsolate, mourning his daughter, when a shepherd-boy applied for an immediate interview with him. The lad was admitted at once. His information amounted to this, and no more; that early on the morning of the abduction, while driving his flock to

their mountain pastures, he had seen a lovely little girl at the foot of the then inaccessible Kedrich, gathering flowers; that all on a sudden, a dwarf-like old man, with a long gray beard, approached her unseen; that he clasped her in his arms with the swiftness of a bird; and that he immediately scrambled, or, rather, sprung from point to point, like a goat, up the steep face of the precipice, until he had attained the summit, where he disappeared in a moment with his prey.

"Who is he? who is he?" exclaimed Sir Sibö, as a suspicion of something more dreadful even than her death crossed his mind.

"Alas!" replied the lad, "I know not, if he be not one of the dwarfs—those evil spirits that dwell in the heart of the Kedrich—who are so easily roused to wrath, and with such difficulty appeased."

This was sufficient for Sir Sibö. He saw what he had done; and he beheld its fearful consequences. The window of the chamber in which he sat looked on the Kedrich; he turned his eyes involuntarily in that direction. On the highest peak of the precipice, sure enough, he beheld his Garlinda; and it seemed to his bewildered imagination as though she stretched forth her little hands to him for assistance and rescue. He turned about to thank the shepherd-boy; but he was gone. A loud laugh of scorn and derision in the corridor, and the words, "I have not forgotten you, nor my promise," shrieked in his ear, caused him to rush at once to the door. At the further extremity was the little old creature whom he had driven forth seven nights before; who now faced him, and with a sardonic smile bowed and disappeared, first repeating,—

"I have not forgotten you, nor my promise."

"Call to horse! call to horse! All! all!—every man in the castle forth!—forth!" rung through the courts and the chambers of Nollingen. Sir Sibö himself headed his vassals; they speedily proceeded to the foot of the Kedrich in full force.

"A thousand marks in gold," cried the afflicted father, "to him who delivers my daughter. Up! up! my men, and win it."

Hundreds tried to clamber the steep acclivity; but it was inaccessible to aught but a bird, or a supernatural being.

"Half my broad lands," now exclaimed the agonised parent, as he witnessed the failure of his vassals ;—"half my broad lands shall be his who brings her back to my arms."

Again were hundreds on the track ; but still more unsuccessfully than before ; for they now lost ten paces for every one they gained. Sir Sibö almost despaired.

"Half my broad lands, and the hand of my daughter," shouted he aloud, in the bitter anguish of his heart.

The dispirited vassals would no more make the experiment. Not a man stirred to take the tempting offer : success was so hopeless.

"Bring mattocks and spades !" he almost screamed ;—"quick ! quick ! for your lives ! for your lives ! We'll cut a road in the rock."

He was obeyed at once. Ardently, and with all their hearts, did the crowd set to work ; for many of them were fathers themselves, and all participated in the agony and deep sorrow of their chief. But here, too, they were foiled. No sooner had they begun their labours, than a shower of stones from the summit of the mountain caused them to desist. Again and again they made the attempt ; but each time the missiles only fell thicker and more heavily than before. At last a rain of rocks put them to flight, and compelled them to relinquish their intention for ever. As the disconsolate, baffled father returned once more to his solitary castle, a voice like thunder, which seemed to boom from the bowels of the mountain, called after him, and said,

"Sir Sibö ! Sir Sibö, stay !——This is the way we return the hospitality we received at your hands in Nollingen. Look up !"

He looked up. Horror-struck and wild with amaze, he saw his beloved child clasped in the long arms of the little, old man, with whom he was, unhappily, so well acquainted. Again she stretched forth her fair round arms for assistance ; and her little mouth moved, as though she besought her father to save her. In another moment she and the dwarf had vanished from his sight. He sunk prostrate on the earth ; and was borne senseless back to his castle.

From that day forward, he was an altered man ; misery had

chastened him ; affliction had engendered sympathy in his heart. Never more was the houseless wanderer driven from his door ; all his fellow-creatures were now to him as the dear child of whom he had been deprived. In the meanwhile he spared no pains and no expense to deliver her from the demons with whom she was compelled to dwell. Vows were made by him to the Virgin and all the saints ; he gave rich gifts to churches, abbeys, cloisters, and charitable foundations ; abundant alms were bestowed from his stores on the poor and the needy ; yet nowhere and from no quarter could he obtain counsel or aid in his dire distress ; all this good seemed to avail him nothing. Days, weeks, months, and years, passed heavily over ; but they brought no hope of deliverance for his daughter. His only consolation in this so deep misery was the certainty that she still lived. How did he obtain it ? His first look at morning and his last at night were always directed to the rocky brow of the Kedrich ; and there, never failing, in sunshine and in storm, he was sure to see his sweet girl, on its highest peak, stretching forth her little white hands to the halls of her fathers.

But we must do justice even to the Gnomes, or Mountain Dwarfs ; and not altogether condemn them for their abduction and detention of Sir Sibó's daughter. We have all seen the cause ; and each will balance in his own mind the provocation with the punishment. Inhospitality is a very bad vice ; and bad though the mountain-spirits may be, we are told it is not prevalent among them. So it was in the present instance. They let the little maiden want for nothing which earth, or sea, or sky, could afford. They built her a small but beautiful bower on the mountain-top ; and they covered its walls with pearl-shells, crystals, and precious stones of every variety of form and colour. Her food was prepared in vessels of gold and silver, fabricated by the Gnomes in the bowels of the earth ; and her bed-furniture was composed of the feathers of the richest and rarest birds in the world. The female Gnomes were very kind to her ; the same gentle feelings which are common to the fair sex of the human race, extended themselves even to these tiny denizens of darkness. They wove her fine clothes from the fibres of plants, when those which she had on at the time of her abduction were worn out ; they made her necklaces of coral and cornelian-stone ; they gave her

diamond stomachers, and composed girdles for her of the purest pearls; they served her little table every day with new milk from the mountain-goats, and fruits of the most delicious freshness and flavour. And when she seemed sad or weary, they would tell her strange stories of things unknown to the sons of men, or sing her to sleep with their soft, sweet, unearthly melodies. Of one among them,—a little, withered, aged-looking creature,—she was an especial favourite; and often and often did this good old dame whisper in her ear, when she appeared sorrowful, as she still lingered near her, after all the rest had gone,—

“Courage! courage, darling! Keep up your little heart! keep up your little heart! For I’ll gather ye a dowry that shall be fit for a king’s daughter; and you shall be free yet.”

Four years had now come and gone since Garlinda was spirited away from the home of her father. All hope of her rescue was completely abandoned by him; he never thought to embrace her again in this life; and he resigned himself patiently to his fate. At this time a considerable stir was caused on the shores of the Rhine by the arrival of Sir Ruthelm, a young knight of the neighbourhood, from Hungary, where he had acquired much glory in his campaigns against the followers of the crescent. Every one spoke of his bravery, and every one spoke of his piety; indeed, he was said to be a paragon of chivalry. In due course he heard of the sad hap which had befallen his neighbour; and he was struck with holy horror at the condition of his lovely daughter. He resolved at once to free her from her captivity, or to die in the attempt. Nollingen was soon reached with that purpose.

“Sir Knight,” said he to the sorrowing father, “I go to rescue your child. Give me your benison, and promise to protect my aged mother, if I perish.”

Sir Sibö grasped his hand, and gave him the required blessing and promise; first stating to him, as freely as a father could be expected to do in such a case, the difficulties which beset the experiment.

“I care not for them,” said the brave youth; “I go in a good cause. God prosper the right!”

“I am rich,” concluded Sir Sibö, “and she is my only

child. Bring her back once more to my arms, and she is yours with all I possess in the wide world as her dowry."

At early dawn next morning Ruthelm went forth to the foot of the Kedrich. The whole day until nightfall was spent by him in trying to find a path up its precipitous face to the peaked summit, which towered high above all in its vicinity; but it was spent in vain, for path could he discover none. Night came on dark and dreary;—not a star shone in the sky, and the moon was not visible till towards midnight. He knew not what course to take; he felt himself defeated, without the satisfaction of a struggle for victory. What was to be done? He could not tell. In this emergency, unwilling to leave the spot, and yet conscious that he could do no good by remaining there even until the morning, a little, old, decrepit man accosted him; and, after the usual salutation, thus proceeded:—

"Is it not true, Sir Knight, that you are here because you have heard of the fate of the lovely Garlinda, who is said to dwell above there on the Kedrich?"

The young knight looked at him with surprise and indignation;—surprise, that he should know so well the cause of his coming; and indignation, that he should address him so familiarly on such a delicate subject. The withered, little wight did not, however, seem to notice his frown, or to heed his surprise either; but thus continued his conversation:—

"She is my foster-daughter——"

Ruthelm was all ear; not a sound escaped him.

"—— I love her very much, and I do not dislike you ——"

"Come," thought the young knight, "that is not bad either." But he said nothing.

"—— Now, if you wish to woo her as your bride, you shall win her. All you have to do is to take her at my hands."

"Done!" shouted Ruthelm. "A word's a word! Done is done!"

"Done!" echoed the little old man, in a voice which made the mountain ring. "A word's a word! Done is done!"

Ruthelm caught his hand, as he spoke, and said,

"'Tis a bargain!"

"'Tis a bargain!" echoed the little man.

Both were silent for a moment.

"I am but a dwarf beside you," resumed the little creature, "but my word is as good as that of a giant, and my power to keep it is not less."

Ruthelm overwhelmed him with thanks.

"Spare your gratitude awhile," continued the dwarf; "at least, until you see whether we can agree as to terms."

"Name them!" cried the young knight. "I agree to any—to every thing you propose."

"Steady—be steady," resumed the Gnome. "Hear them first. They are not very easy, to be sure; but then, considering the glorious prize that is at stake, they cannot by any means be called hard either. Not that I say it that should not say it, there's not a maiden in the whole broad Rhine-gau that is her like in beauty, and understanding, and goodness."

"Name them!—name them!" again vehemently cried the eager youth.

"Well, then, you must find the way up to her—those are my terms."

With these words, the little old creature disappeared in a thicket, close by where they stood, laughing so loud and so long, that Ruthelm felt quite angered.

"What is to be done?" soliloquised the discomfited young knight, as he strained his eyes, in the darkness, to discover the summit of the mountain.

"Climb up!" echoed the voice of the dwarf; and another peal of laughter, which seemed to die away in the distance, followed.

Ruthelm looked, and looked, and looked again on the precipice; but he looked, and looked, and looked in vain. The darkness was so dense, that he could see nothing, even if there was any chance of finding a path up its acclivitous side.

"Alas!" soliloquised he again, forgetful at the moment of the result of his former experiment; "alas! alas! there is no getting up there without wings."

"Wings!" echoed a shrill, small voice behind him;—"wings indeed! No need of wings to do it either."

He turned about to where the sound came from; and as he did so, felt himself clapped kindly on the back by some tiny hand.

"I have heard you," said a withered, little, old creature, who now became visible to him; "I have heard you, and I have witnessed, unseen, the bargain you have just made with my brother. He is my brother. He's very funny sometimes—Ha! ha! ha!"

"What does all this portend?" thought Ruthelm; but he let her proceed without interruption.

"—— Garlinda's father, it is true, has done what he ought not—indeed, he behaved very scurvily to my brother. But what of that? He has now suffered for it these four long years, and that's a good stretch; and then, after all, why should the poor child be punished for what she had no hand in?"——

The little creature paused, as if to take breath, and then continued in reply to Ruthelm's inquiring glances.

"—— She is a beautiful, virtuous, pious, good little girl; and I'm quite sure that whoever may refuse a night's lodging to the weary and belated traveller, she never will. I have loved her like a mother; and she loves me like a daughter. But I have no objection that she should be the wife of some valiant knight; and I rather like you."

Ruthelm would fain have overwhelmed the old dame with thanks; but she put up her finger for him to keep silence, and went on.

"—— My brother has given you his word that she shall be your bride; and we never gainsay our promise. I'll now shew you how to fulfil the condition he imposed on you. Here—take this little silver bell, and proceed straight to the Whisper Dell. When you have got half through it, you will come to a ruined shed which covers a mine-shaft that has not been worked for ages. You will not fail to know it; for an old beech and an aged pine have sprung up at each side of it, and interlaced their thick boughs over it, so as to form an impervious canopy. Enter the shed without fear; and look into the mouth of the mine. Then ring that little bell distinctly three times. My younger brother—it was my elder whom you just saw—lives in the deepest recesses of the mine; he will appear at the summons. He is good-natured, but a thought hasty. However, the bell will shew him that you are in my confidence; and he will proffer his services to you after his first surprise is over. When he

asks you what he can do for you, tell him at once that you wish him to make, without delay, a ladder that will reach from the bottom to the top of the Kedrich. He'll do it; and then, you do the rest yourself. Remember!"

With these words she disappeared.

Ruthelm did precisely as she directed. He hastened to the Whisper Dell; entered the ruined shed, which he had no difficulty whatever in finding; and rang the little silver bell over the mouth of the abandoned mine. The echo of the last sound had not ceased, when a glimmer of light illumined the depths below; and in a moment or two more, a little, old, gray-bearded mannikin made his appearance at the entrance of the shaft.

"What do you want with me?" exclaimed he, in an angry voice. "Why is my sleep broken?" He looked as fierce as though he could have flung his lanthorn at Ruthelm's head, and brained him on the spot.

"Your sister ——" stammered the young knight.

"—— Ah, my sister," said the tiny wight rather more gently.

"—— Sent me," continued Ruthelm, somewhat encouraged by the softened accent in which he mentioned his sister.

"—— Yes, I know it all," quickly interposed the mannikin; "she is too good-natured. She wishes me to serve you. Well, I'll do it; for I love her. But what do you desire? Be brief."

"A ladder, to reach from the bottom to the top of the Kedrich, planted there by daybreak," said the knight.

"'Tis rather a bit of a job," answered the old man, after a moment's pause; "rather a tough one too; but it shall be done."

"Here! here! here!" he exclaimed, blowing thrice into a small, shrill, silver whistle, which he took from his pocket.

In a moment the valley was filled with a countless crowd of dwarfs and Gnomes, all bearing axes, and hammers, and saws, and planes, on their shoulders.

"What 's your will, master? What 's your will?" was murmured from thousands of voices. The young knight in his own mind compared the sounds to that of the sea rippling on an extensive shore, in a calm day of summer.

The mannikin spoke a few words to them in an unknown

tongue; and immediately they set about felling trees, and preparing posts with the activity of so many monkeys.

"Go, now," said he to Ruthelm, "and be at the foot of the Kedrich when the gray dawn streaks the sky."

Ruthelm departed full of hope; for the note of preparation echoed in his ears during the greater part of his journey.

By the first cock-crow he was at the foot of the mountain; and there, sure enough, he found a ladder firmly fixed at its foot, which reached to its highest peak. He began the ascent, a little anxious, and not altogether unfearful at the first; but he gained heart at every step he made upward; and, bounding with anticipated joy, he soon attained the summit. The first sight that greeted his eyes, as he sprang on the platform of the precipice, was the lovely Garlinda. His heart leaped within him. She lay asleep, in all the security of youth and innocence, upon a mossy bank, bordered with wild roses, and the sweetest of sweet-smelling herbs and flowers. Ruthelm gazed on the exquisite form which lay before him; he felt that he was no longer his own master; he had found the being who was destined to bless him. In the meanwhile the wild bees hovered over the sleeping beauty, humming, like Melody herself, their matutinal song of praise; and ever and anon diving into the dewy bells of the awakening flowers for refreshment. It was such a scene as is only to be seen once in the life of man. Garlinda awoke; and her soft, full blue eyes—rivals of the heavens above them in purity and loveliness—beamed on Ruthelm. He sank on his knees at her feet.

"Beautiful maiden!" exclaimed he, "I am here to deliver you. I come to restore you to the arms of your sire. Deign to accept my services."

Garlinda knew not what to say, or what to do; the circumstances in which she was placed were altogether so novel to her. But she did as nature directed her: she blushed, and smiled, and shed a few pearly tears: and then she held forth her little white hand to the kneeling knight. He seized it ardently, and covered it with burning kisses; at which she blushed, and smiled, and wept again, like a young May morning. He led her to the ladder.

"Ho! ho! ho!" cried a rough voice at their elbow.

They turned about quickly. Immediately behind them were the little old man, who had borne Garlinda away from her father, and the little old woman, his sister, who had suggested to the young knight the means of ascending to the bower.

"Ho, ho!" said he; and his brow blackened as he gazed on Ruthelm.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the little old crone; and she pointed to the ladder.

"Ha, ha, ha!" burst out her brother into a fit of immoderate laughter, as he saw it. "I am outwitted. Ha, ha, ha!"

Garlinda looked imploringly on him; and Ruthelm felt rather fidgetty, for all his courage and bravery.

"Well, well," continued the old fellow; "well, well: done is done: a bargain's a bargain. I see how it is. You have contrived to come round my sister. She has too soft a heart. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, but—" interposed the little old woman—"you know, brother——"

"Never mind—never mind," interrupted he; "a word is a word, and should always be so. He won her—let him have her!"

Ruthelm pricked up his ears at this: and Garlinda blushed so deeply, that no red rose had ever a deeper dye than her pure white neck assumed in that moment.

"Take her!" continued the little old man, addressing himself to the young knight; "take, and treat her well! But, remember, if you be not more hospitable than her father was, it will be all the worse for yourself!"

The young couple were clasped in one another's arms ere the old man had well done speaking.

"Stay, stay!" said he; "don't be so quick! You shall not have her this moment. Go you back the way you came. We must bedeck our foster-daughter for the bridal, as beseems our condition."

Ruthelm had no alternative. He descended the ladder. Garlinda was led by the old man and his sister through the heart of the mountain, to an aperture at its foot. There she joined her lover in safety.

"Here, my child," said the old woman, as she kissed her at parting; "here is the dowry I have gathered up for you."

She then presented her with a palm-tree cabinet, filled with the most costly diamonds, and all manner of rich and precious stones.

Garlinda took them thankfully, and kissed and wept on the neck of the good, little creature.

Ruthelm speedily bore his bride to the castle of her father; whose joy at her recovery knew no bounds. He at once gave her to the young knight; and he blessed their nuptials with a father's blessing. From thenceforward Sir Sibö ordained, that all travellers passing through Lorch should be entertained eight days at the castle without question; and as many more as they absolutely needed, without comment.

Garlinda and Ruthelm lived long and happily together; and at the birth of every child of their numerous family, the little, old woman made her appearance with a christening present. When they had reached a good old age, they died, and were buried together in the church at Lorch. Their virtues, however, as well as their image, survived in their offspring.

The ladder alluded to in this tale, or some other ladder like it, stood for a long series of years against the face of the Kedrich. The inhabitants of the neighbourhood deemed it the work of evil spirits, and gave it the name of the "Devil's Ladder." In progress of time, as it decayed and fell to pieces, the same name was transferred to the precipice against which it had been placed.

There is another tradition extant about the Devil's Ladder, which, as it gives a somewhat different version of the legend attached to this spot, may not be properly omitted in a work treating principally of such subjects.

Sir Gilgen of Lorch was the lord of Nollingen in the middle of the twelfth century. Like all the other nobles of the Rhine at that period, he followed Conrad, emperor of Germany, to the second crusade, excited by the preaching of St. Bernard, and the predictions of the prophetess Hildegard, abbess of St. Rupertsberg. In acting thus, Sir Gilgen made more sacrifices than most of his co-peers; for he not only left behind him his lordly halls, his woods, his fields, and his forests, but he also

abandoned a lovely bride, to whom he had been only a few weeks married. Every league, however, that he measured, nay, every step he advanced towards the end of his toilsome journey, made him only feel the more the loss he had voluntarily sustained, the happiness he had knowingly relinquished ; and by the time he had reached Constantinople, whence the crusaders were transported across the Hellespont to Asia, his zeal for the cause of the Cross had become completely absorbed in his longing for home, and his overpowering love for his deserted bride. One kiss from her sweet lips seemed more pleasant to his excited imagination than the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidels : and one glance on the glorious Rhine, and over his wide-spread possessions on its banks, from the donjon of Nollingen castle, was worth, in his estimation, the entire territory of Palestine, and all that it contains of high and holy remembrances. It will, therefore, excite neither surprise nor indignation in our minds, to find him deserting the crusading host ; and, taking advantage of a dark night, quitting the camp, for the purpose of returning to the home and the heart he had deserted.

Long and toilsome as had been his journey towards the East, his journey homeward was infinitely more so : for he was a solitary fugitive in a hostile country, subject to all the hardships which an unsettled state of society and perpetual war unfailingly produce. But he was sustained through them all by the fond hopes of his again embracing his beloved bride, of again seeing the abode of his fathers, of again moving as lord and master, in place of being a subservient follower among thousands. He embarked on the Rhine above Strasburg ; as the most rapid mode of travelling then known in the country. In a few days he caught sight of the majestic towers of Nollingen, looking down on Lorch, and reflected in all their manifold forms from the noble river which flowed beneath them. His heart leaps with joy—the shore is reached—he springs on shore—he rushes up the steep acclivity which leads to the gates of the castle ! Alas ! alas ! — his halls are desolate — his portals are prostrate — grass grows in the court-yard. His home has been the prey of the spoiler — his stronghold has been ravaged in his absence. He clears the fallen gates—he crosses the court—he rushes up the winding stairs which lead to his ladye's bower. Heavenly God !

it is deserted—she is gone! In vain did he make the old walls ring with her name. Echo only answered his passionate cries. He left the castle and descended to Lorch. On his way he encountered an ancient retainer; and from him he learned the following particulars.—Subsequent to his departure, even on that very night, as it appeared, when he deserted the Christian camp, a neighbouring robber-chief had assaulted his castle, and taken it by surprise, in the dead of a dark and dreary winter's night; and when he had plundered it of every thing it contained of value, he then carried off the lonely and despairing lady, its defenceless inhabitant.

Sir Gilgen was furious—despair drove him almost mad. He summoned all his feudatories and vassals of every degree; and next morning at dawn proceeded to the place pointed out as the abode of the ravisher and the captive lady. It was a strong tower of considerable extent, situated on the summit of the mountain known by the name of the Devil's Ladder; and it was deemed inaccessible to all but this bandit, who they said was in league with the prince of the powers of darkness. Sir Gilgen and his followers reached the mountain in a short space of time: but to his misfortune and bitter disappointment, he found that he was as far as ever from the object of his expedition—his beloved bride. In vain did he attempt the ascent to the summit: a cat could scarcely crawl up the fearful precipice which overhung him. In vain did he encompass it round and round, no path was visible by which the nest of the robber could be reached. He cursed his bitter lot, and called out to the bandit, in every opprobrious term he could think of, to come down and meet him on equal ground, for life and for death—the bride to be the prize of the survivor. The bandit put his head out of the highest casement of the tower, as though he only then became aware of the presence of enemies at the foot of his rocky fortalice.

“Who 's here?” quoth he, yawning wide; “why such a rout? What for disturb my rest so early in the morning? Go your ways and breakfast, and then call again. My sleep must not be broken.”

“Give me my wife, thief that thou art!” shrieked Sir Gilgen; —“give me my beloved wife, or I'll send you and your whole crew to hell!”

"Ho! ho!" laughed the bandit, scornfully, while the mountain echoes multiplied his shout with a fiendish glee; "ho! ho! is that you? Come for your wife, eh? Very considerate of you, truly: but it would be more so if you had never left her; a rare temptation was it to lusty lads like me. Ho! ho!"

"Give me my wife!—give me my wife!" was all that the boiling rage of Sir Gilgen would allow him to utter.

"Oh, you want your wife? Ho! ho! ho!" again laughed the ruffian from the security of his mountain fortalice; and again Echo shouted in a thousand fiendish voices, "Wife! ho! ho!"

"Well, you shall have her," he continued; "but it must be on my own terms only."

"Name them," cried the bereaved husband.

"If you wish to get her again," he spake, "you and your fellows who stand looking so foolish below there, must ride up hither, on the face of this precipice, a-horseback: and then, perhaps, your wish may be accomplished. I must now to sleep again. So, good morning."

He clapped to the casement with a loud crash, and was seen no more: but from the roof of the turret over it was seen waving a white kerchief; and, peering forth above the high battlements, Sir Gilgen beheld a female head. It was the features of his lost bride; and he heard the faint sound of her soft accents encouraging him to persevere, and urging him to obtain, at any price, her redemption from the power of the tyrant ravisher.

Roused to more than madness, the hapless husband, shouting to his vassals to follow, rushed up the steep acclivity; but it was impossible for them to find footing for even a fraction of its height. Down came the horses, and down came the riders: those on foot shared the same fate: broken limbs were the reward of many—severe contusions of all. Sir Gilgen himself lay under his steed at the foot of the mountain, crushed almost to a jelly. Again did he attempt the ascent, and again did the same consequences ensue. Foaming with rage, overwhelmed with despair, consumed by jealousy—a prey, in short, to all the evil passions of our nature, he thus soliloquised, with a tremendous oath, stamping on the ground and gnashing his teeth in the meanwhile:

"This is my reward for deserting the cause of Christ: thus

am I requited for abandoning the crusade. I deserve it. It is a judgment on me. But my love is as an unquenchable flame : and I must again have my bride, whatever price it may cost me—body or soul ! Heaven has clearly withdrawn its protection from me : no other resource now remains but to have recourse to the powers of hell ! Yes, I'll sell my soul to the devil !—she shall be released."

He recalled his vassals, and they returned again to Lorch.

Deep in the untrodden recesses of the Whisper Dell, dwelt an aged wizard, noted all through the land for his diabolical power over the spirits of the deep. Sir Gilgen despatched a trusty retainer to his den ; and bade him to Nollingen on business of great import. The wicked old wretch did not delay : he had a presentiment of the cause of the invitation. Sir Gilgen received him with every honour : and in the dead of the night informed him of his resolution. It may be easily surmised that the sorcerer used no argument to dissuade him from it : on the contrary, he encouraged him with the most flattering hopes of success and future happiness. When the miserable husband was completely in his satanic toils, he left him ; promising to return next midnight. He returned accordingly : and Sir Gilgen and he left the castle in secrecy ; proceeding to the heart of the Whisper Dell. A fearful gulf yawned before them, after they had walked, with toil and trouble, for upwards of an hour : it looked, in the darkness of the night, like the entrance of hell !—so black and so hideously did its awful jaws gape on them. They entered, the sorcerer preceding his victim. A dim light suddenly illumined the cavern, shewing partially its horrors, but leaving the worst of them to the imagination. The old wizard made a circle of bones and skulls ;—the knight and he stood within its inclosure. He uttered words of power in a language unknown to his companion ; the rocky roof and bottom of the vault shook as it were with an earthquake ; and shrieks, and sounds of deep grief and great sorrow, echoed all around. He spake on :—the ground was cleft in twain, and a thick smoke burst upwards, which seemed surcharged with the foulest odours of the infernal

regions. Still he continued his adjurations until he had concluded them:—then he clapped his hands together, and uttered a fearful curse. With a noise far surpassing that of the loudest thunder, a bright blue flame sprang forth from the abyss; and in a few seconds the prince of the powers of hell appeared enveloped in it, and clad in all his attributes of terror. Sir Gilgen quaked with fear—his tottering knees could scarce support his trembling frame; he saw, as in a vista, all the consequences of the evil deed he was about to do; his good angel whispered him that it was not yet too late to redeem his immortal soul. But his passion was stronger than his fear; it overpowered all other feelings. The compact was made, and sealed with his blood; the demon promised him his effectual aid: the light then sunk in the chasm whence it had arisen; the scene seemed to whirl around him: he fell senseless to the earth; and he awoke—in his chamber at Nollingen, fevered, flushed, and as wretched in mind as man might be.

The castle-courts and corridors again resounded to the call to arms; Sir Gilgen bestrode his horse, and at the head of his vassals once more galloped to the foot of the Kedrich.

“Hurrah!” shouted he, as he clapped spurs to the stately animal, who, thus urged, ascended the face of the precipice as though it had wings. “Hurrah!” he shouted, as he reached the top of the rock.

“Hurrah! hurrah!” echoed the host of retainers below, who vainly strove to follow him at first; but soon desisted, to watch his fearful progress.

A moment more and he had reached the gate of the tower. It was barred and bolted; but one blow of his sword made bar and bolt fall before him like so many nettle-tops in spring, under the idle stroke of a rustic's cudgel. He sprang onward: horse and man clattered and crashed up the narrow stair as though it were level ground. The robber chief was aroused from his slumbers: he rushed forth: his glaive glanced in the morning sun, as he waved it high over his head in act to hew down the intruder.

“Hold!” shouted a fearful voice, in tones like thunder—
“your hour is come!”

The robber looked and trembled; beside him stood Satan with a small scroll of parchment, written in human blood, dis-

played to his view. He tottered ; the sword fell from his nerveless grasp in the very moment that the keen falchion of Sir Gilgen cut its way through bone and brain, and clove him down to the chine. He then fell dead on the floor ; and the devil disappeared with his howling spirit.

On sped Sir Gilgen ;—he traversed steep stair and narrow passage ;—he rode through room, and corridor, and recess, until he reached the turret top. There, in a grated chamber, he found his long-lost and dearly bought bride. It is not the purpose of this narrative to tell their transports, or to relate the joy that was manifested by both at meeting : suffice it to say, that the soul of the knight was overclouded with a double sorrow ; for the ladye of his love looked as though she were among the doomed, and he remembered his own pact with the arch-enemy of mankind. Placing her before him on his gallant steed, however, he descended the precipice with the same ease and safety as he had reached its summit ; and then he conveyed his precious prize to Nollingen, amidst the acclamations of the multitude.

But the seeds of death had been sown in the constitution of this fair creature : sorrow, and persecution, and imprisonment, and fright, had done the work of years and deadly disease on her most delicate frame. She withered under the eyes of her doting husband day after day : hour after hour he perceived the purple light of youth, and health, and strength, to pale, and then to grow dim and dimmer : yet even death could not altogether destroy her loveliness—that fatal dowry for which her fond spouse had lost his soul ! She died : but it was as a fair flower which still retains its hue and its odour long after it has perished. With her died all that Sir Gilgen prized on earth.

His misfortune was now at the full : the cup of his affliction overflowed. She for whom he had lost all, gone from him for ever—his earthly peace at an end—his eternal misery foredoomed by himself. Heaven rejected him : hell yawned for him : the demons of despair howled around him ! Within six short hours of her decease he had fallen on his sword. It is said that his soul was borne off to the abode of the damned by the devil and his demoniacal agents, amid shrieks, and curses, and wailing, and other sounds of dread, and despair, and woe : but let us hope that a merciful God interposed his protection,

and that the hapless husband was united again, in the other world, to that wife he loved so well in this, and for whose sake he had suffered so much, and made such fearful sacrifices.

Since this adventure, it is related that the Kedrich, in that particular part of it where this wondrous feat was performed, has been named the "Devil's Ladder," in allusion to this event; and an old saddle is still shewn in Lorch, as that on which Sir Gilgen rode to the summit of the mountain.

FÜRSTENBERG.

Almost directly opposite Lorch, on the left bank of the Rhine, rise the remains of the once famous castle of Fürstenberg. Lordly even in ruin, they still tower commandingly over the humble hamlet of Medenschied, which nestles at the foot of the hill on which they are situated. The castle of Fürstenberg was demolished in the "war of succession," by the French forces on the Rhine, A.D. 1689. Of its earlier history little authentic is known; but there are many legends of it in those ancient days still current among the neighbouring peasantry. This is one of the most popular of them.

THE PHANTOM MOTHER.

Franz von Fürst, lord of the castle of Fürstenberg, in the thirteenth century, after a youth of dissipation and licentiousness, settled down into a serious manhood, which gave his friends fair promise and good hope of an honourable future for him. A wound received in a drunken duel with one of the companions of his revelries, which lamed him for a considerable period, greatly helped to soberize his temperament, and contributed much to this change for the better that had taken place in his mode of life. Acting under the advice of his relations, he sought a wife; and he found a maiden fitted to make any man happy, in Kunigunda von Florsheim. They were married: every thing went on happily; and nought seemed likely to dim the prospect of a peaceful and unclouded life, which lay bright and clear before them. Kunigunda was young, virtuous, and highly

bred ; she loved order and arrangement in her household ; and in her the poor and the necessitous never failed to find a friend. Franz von Fürst loved her, or seemed to love her : we shall soon know enough of him to say no more.

As they sat together in the castle garden one lovely summer eve, a maiden was announced, who had arrived on a visit to Kunigunda. Her name was Amina. She was the daughter of a neighbouring noble, whose castle had been destroyed, and whose household and family had been dispersed, because of the depredations he had committed on passengers on the road and on the river. He had himself sought refuge no one knew whither. Amina, having now no longer a home, sought one with the friend of her youth ; and she found a welcome, such as only virtue and goodness give to distress and danger. From thenceforward she became a denizen of Fürstenberg ; and divided, with its lady, the attentions of its lord.

Amina was young, and very beautiful ; and, in so far, there was a similarity between her and Kunigunda : but there the similarity altogether ceased ; for Amina was as close and as crafty in her nature as her friend was open and free. The result of this visit was speedily made apparent.

Franz von Fürst's amendment was, after all, but a seeming reformation. The habits of years are not so easily changed. His old feelings for vice had but slept ; they were by no means extinguished : the snake was only scotched—it was not killed. He thought of his wild reckless youth ; and he longed to live over again the days that had departed. Little recked he of the bliss he enjoyed in a virtuous wife, and a quiet, well-ordered, happy home ; the greatest blessings man can have on this earth : he would again lead the unconstrained life of a *bon vivant*, and a gay bachelor. It is not difficult to foresee the consequences of this desire.

Amina, in short, managed matters so adroitly, that she soon won his fickle affections. From that moment the doom of Kunigunda was decided. The false friend filled his mind with insinuations against the bride of his bosom : she bade him mark her bearing—she construed her tenderness into hypocrisy—her gentleness into coldness—her love into indifference. The weak husband believed her ; and the innocent wife was lost.

Nine months after the birth of a beautiful boy, Kunigunda, who had never held up her head from the instant the fatal conviction of her husband's altered affections flashed on her mind, was one morning found dead in her bed. It was given out by her husband and his paramour that she had been suffocated in the night with a fit of coughing; and that she had died before assistance could reach her. She was hurried to the family vault in the castle chapel, with unseemly haste; and, with a haste still more unseemly, within one week after her funeral, Amina stood beside the altar whence the ritual for the dead had been repeated so very few days before, responding as the bride of the Baron of Fürstenberg.

The boy, the offspring of the hapless Kunigunda, was now totally neglected. No longer a tender mother's care watched over the dangers and difficulties which beset the days of his infancy: no longer the father looked proud as he gazed on his child, and hoped to see himself revived in him. Far other things occupied the mind of Franz—perhaps he called them pleasures—I know not. Poor little Hugo, however, shared the hate which Amina bore to his departed mother; and his infantile sufferings were uncared for by his heartless sire, who was now wholly swallowed up in the artifices and intrigues of his new bride. The helpless infant was soon consigned to the charge of an old female domestic; and both were exiled to the most distant tower of the castle. The nurse was old, as I have just said; she was also ill-natured: the child was unaccustomed to neglect; and he manifested his feeling at it by his restlessness. Many and many a bitter curse did the crone bestow on the baby as he cried a-nights, and kept her awake: many and many a time did she wish him with his dead mother, when he roused her from her sleep by his impatience and fretfulness. Thus things went on for a time.

One night, however, the cruel old creature awoke of a sudden from her sleep. She awoke as though she were compelled to do so by some invisible power, which painfully urged her to consciousness. It was a bright night, and the moonbeams streamed full into the spacious chamber, making every thing distinctly visible in their pure clear light. She sat upright in her bed: she felt as though she were forced to do so. A creaking sound struck her ear! Could it be the cradle of the baby? so she

thought. But the idea seemed impossible to her. Again the rocking creak came on her ear; and, anon, the low suppressed notes of a female voice were audible, singing the old nursery song,

“Hush ye, my baby; on the tree top,
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock.”

She drew the curtains, and sprang from the bed; and lo! by the cradle she saw a female, clothed in long white garments, leaning over the sleeping innocent; and heard her crooning softly that well-known nursery ditty. She looked again. Horror upon horror! it was the deceased Kunigunda—the hapless babe’s mother—who sat and rocked the cradle while she sung her orphan son to sleep. The old nurse could not move—she could not faint, though a mortal sickness fell on her—she could not stir, more than if she had been made of marble. After a time, the ghost took the child from the cradle, placed it on her lap, undid its night-clothes, and looked carefully all over its little body, as if to discover whether it had any unseen cause of pain or uneasiness: then again as carefully clothing it, she laid it down gently, as a mother only may do, in its little nest, and covered it up most comfortably. The infant slept meanwhile as soundly as the dead. A few moments more the phantom mother only lingered; for the clear shrill note of the cock came full on the breeze from the court below. Slowly rising from her seat beside the cradle, she bent over her sleeping boy, and imprinting a kiss on his cherub lips, with a deep, long-drawn sigh, which resounded through the vaulted apartment like an echo from the other world, she suddenly disappeared. The old nurse sank senseless on the bed; and in that condition remained until the morning was far gone.

On her recovery, she sought her lord and his lady, and told them her tale. Franz von Fürstenberg affected to disbelieve it, and abused her heartily for her folly; but even as he did so, his heart failed within him; for he felt that her story was but too true. Amina, however, did not disbelieve the main facts of the narration: she only concluded that Kunigunda had not been effectually poisoned; and that life had been restored to her by some intervention of which she possessed no knowledge. When a woman loses herself, she is indeed lost. Full of this idea, the murderess resolved to take the nurse’s place herself the

next night ; and she armed herself with a long, sharp dagger to complete the deed she deemed had only been unsuccessfully attempted. She did not communicate her entire plan to her husband, but only informed him that she meant, herself, to test the nurse's tale. It would, however, have been all the same if she had ; for he was so infatuated with her vile arts, that he had no will of his own, and scarcely a perception of good or evil that was not coincident with her opinions.

The night fell, and Amina took her place in the nurse's bed. Rage, jealousy, disappointment, and the desire of her rival's death, were the feelings that overflowed in her black heart. The hour of midnight drew nigh ;—the clock struck eleven. A deep sleep fell on her. She was awakened by the cries of the babe, exactly as the clock struck twelve. She looked towards the cradle. There sat Kunigunda. She knew her dead friend at once, for the moonbeams fell full on her pale face. But, oh, how changed was that face ! The colour of the grave—the hue of the damp, rotting mould was over it all. The eye, however, was still bright ; but it was with a brightness altogether unearthly. The sinful Amina had never seen aught like it. While she looked—fascinated even as the bird by the glance of the snake—she saw the phantom perform the same operation that the old nurse had described. She then saw her kiss the babe, and rise to depart. Her evil passions now got the upperhand of her terror and dread :—she sprang from the bed, and just as the form of her murdered friend passed by in the act of leaving the chamber, she rushed towards it, and grasped at her upraised arm. She grasped at air ;—the form was impalpable ;—nothing met her touch. Powerless she fell on the floor. Meanwhile the phantom moved slowly towards the chamber door ; and there standing for a moment, shook her hand in a threatening manner at the prostrate sinner. In another moment she had disappeared. Amina fainted away. Sensation returned to her only at the dawning of the day. She then retired to her chamber ; and, from that hour, was never more seen in the castle.

In the course of the afternoon the following billet was found on her dressing-table ; it was handed to the baron, her husband, to whom it was addressed. Thus it ran :—

“ I have seen the ghost of the murdered Kunigunda. I go

to repent me of my sins in a nunnery. Never again shall we meet in this world. Go and do likewise."

The heart of the baron was touched. Life had no longer any pleasure for him. Remorse, with all its busy fiends, was at work in his bewildered brain. He commended his infant son to the care of the pious pastor of Medenschied; and betaking himself to the wild woods, he there built a hermitage, in which, after a life of penitence, he died, it is to be hoped, the death of peace.

HEIMBURG.

Higher up—a very little higher up the river on the same side—stands the ruined Castle of Heimbürg. Like to its predecessor and companion, Fürstenberg, little authentic is known of the earlier periods of its history. It is believed, however, to have been built on the foundation of a much more ancient structure, which existed in the times when the Franks governed this portion of Germany; and it is stated to have been reduced to its present condition by the celebrated "Confederation of the Rhine," in the middle ages. It is of the first period alluded to that the following tradition treats; and the authority on which it rests is an apocryphal Latin manuscript preserved in one of the older local historians, and already quoted in these pages.* Pharamund, of questionable existence, is the hero of this legend; which, therefore, must be fixed as about his era, a period yet unsettled by history. It is presented here in all its original integrity.

THE MURDERED LADY.

"Pharamund," proceeds the manuscript, "king of the Salique Franks,† who led the first invaders of that name and nation into

* Widder.—The MS. is denominated "*Antiquitates imperii primi ad Rhenum*." Vide Bacharach—Stableck, i. p. 242.

† Gibbon ("Decline and Fall of the Rom. Emp." cap. xxxi.) says, "the foundation of the French monarchy by Pharamund—the conquests, the laws, and even the existence of that hero, have been justly arraigned by the impartial severity of modern criticism."

"Chlodio is the first known king of the Salique Franks. To him succeeded Meröveus, who was recognised by all following sovereigns as their original ancestor—hence the name of the Merövigian dynasty."—HERMANN'S *Allg. Gesch.* p. 154.

Germany, took up his abode in the land of the Vangiones, on the Middle Rhine; and built there as his capital the city of Pharamunda, subsequently corrupted into Pharmacia, and ultimately into Wormatia or Worms. His brother Mörolus ruled the Ripuarian Franks; who, under his guidance, made the Lower Rhine their residence. Both princes were engaged in constant wars with the Romans under Gratian and Honorius; and the success which attended their arms was various, as the occasion or the circumstance offered.

Among the followers of Pharamund was a knight named Sueno, whose dwelling was in the Castle of Heimbürg, amidst the lovely and sublime scenery of the Rhine shores. He was a great favourite with the king; for he was bravest of the brave; of consummate prudence and tried fidelity; and the post of honour in the field was always conceded to his wisdom, or obtained by his valour. Nay, Pharamund, in those few intervals which a partial truce afforded, would often accompany him to his castle, and spend the time in the enjoyment of his hospitality. But it was whispered that other causes besides a fondness for the society of his follower, or a love of the beauty of inanimate nature, by which Heimbürg was so abundantly surrounded, attracted him so frequently thither. Sir Sueno was a widowed husband:—the beloved of his heart had died shortly after their union; and he had never taken another wife. It was said that he survived this great loss with much difficulty; and that he was only persuaded to live for the sake of an only child, the fruit of their marriage, a beautiful girl. Her name was Ida: and as she grew in years, she also grew in loveliness, so that her name became a by-word for beauty among her people. Pharamund heard of her charms; and, under pretence of visiting her sire, found an opportunity of judging for himself. It was insinuated from thenceforward that she was the magnet which made him prefer the splendid solitude of Heimbürg to the barbarian pomp and pageantry of the court at Worms.

Once more, however, war broke out afresh. The restless spirit of the Franks was unsatisfied with an inactive opulence; they longed for an affray with their rich neighbours the Romans; and valued more the booty acquired in battle than the product which the teeming soil so easily yielded to their peaceful labours.

Once more Pharamund placed himself at the head of his nation ; and took the field, accompanied by his faithful followers. Sir Sueno was not absent on this occasion ; and a place of the first importance was assigned to him near the person of the king. The Romans were everywhere routed ; but the principal defeat they sustained was in a pitched battle which took place in the valley of Queich : after which, they could never more make head against the invaders. In this battle, Sir Sueno, by his conduct and bravery, contributed so much to the victory, that Pharamund, in gratitude for the services he had performed, thanked him publicly, at the head of his troops, when the battle was over ; presented him with a rich gold-hilted sword, part of the spoils of the Roman tribune slain on that occasion ; and named him chief of the division of his forces which he left in possession of the adjacent country, while he himself made an irruption into the enemy's territories on the Upper Rhine. This occurred in Gaul.

The summer sped past ;—so did the late days of autumn ;—and winter soon fell on the fields and forests : but still Pharamund rejoined not his forces in Gaul ; still Sir Sueno remained their chief. One evening, as the shades of night fast approached, the general sat at the entrance of his rude hut, looking out on the landscape covered with thick snow, thinking deeply of his home, and his daughter, and his long dead but still unforgotten wife ; and his heart became filled with sorrowful forebodings, yet he wist not whence they came, or why. As he thus sate, his head upon his hands—his spirit communing with the past—he became aware of the approach of a horse and its rider at full speed ; a few moments more, and he beheld one of his own domestics from his castle on the far-distant Rhine spring from the foaming steed, and fling himself, breathless with haste, and overpowered with fatigue, at his feet. A thousand fearful thoughts rushed through Sir Sueno's mind with the rapidity of light—a thousand vague and indefinable presentiments of evil agitated his soul ; but form or body had they none ; and he reproved himself for the unmanly weakness of anticipating misfortune without cause or sufficient circumstance. The prostrate rider rose.

“ Say, what would you with me ?” spake his master.

“ I greet thee, most noble knight,” replied the vassal ; “ may

the gods have thee in their sacred keeping, and ever lead thee on to victory. I am the bearer of a message of deep import to your peace. The castle warder commissioned me to tell ——”

“ Hold !” cried the knight.

He feared to hear the news from home. It might be of the illness—it might be of the death of his only hope on earth, his only joy—his daughter.

“ But, stay,” he resumed, after a brief pause, in which he had time to recover his equanimity of soul, “ go on and say the worst, but say it speedily.”

“ My lord and master,” hesitated the serf.

“ My daughter is sick ? or she is mayhap dead ?” soliloquized the sire, with a deep sigh, as heedless of the messenger’s presence —“ or haply some accident hath befallen Heimburg, my proud castle ?”

“ Alas ! alas ! Sir Knight,” replied the serf, “ I bring thee but tidings of bad cheer. Courage, my noble master, for the tale I have to tell will require all your manhood to hear.”

“ What mean you, audacious slave ?” Sir Sueno spake, half unsheathing his curt Roman glaive. “ Yet, no ; you are but the bearer of a message ! Go on.”

“ It is not of accident to your proud Castle of Heimburg, I would fain tell you,” proceeded the trembling vassal ; “ nor is it of the sickness, much less the death, of your daughter, that I have to speak ; but it is still of your daughter, the lovely Ida, that my message imports. Pardon me, my lord, while you listen to what I must say.”

Sir Sueno could not utter a word for sheer apprehension ; but he motioned the menial to proceed without fear of his anger or interruption.

“ The warder of Heimburg,” continued the serf, “ sends me to say, as his duty beseems, that your daughter is ——”

He hesitated for some moments ; and a deep silence, unbroken save by the hard, thick breathing of Sir Sueno, and the panting of the speaker’s own heart, succeeded. The agonized father motioned him again to proceed. The serf hung his head as he slowly and sadly pronounced the word—

“ —— Dishonoured ! —— ”

“ Speak it out !” gasped the knight.

“ And carries under her heart,” went on the speaker, “ a child, of which no one knows the father.”

The afflicted sire fell back into his seat—his head hung on his bosom—he looked the very image of grief;—overwhelmed with sorrow—plunged in the depths of despair—broken-hearted. But this mood lasted not long. He sprang at once on his feet, and shouted aloud for his trusty battle-steed. It was brought.

“ By the hammer of Thor,” he muttered to himself with clenched teeth, while he raised his hand to heaven, as if invoking it to be the witness of his oath; “ by the hammer of Thor and the head of Odin, I shall have revenge for this outrage. This stain on my blood shall be washed out with the heart’s juice of those who inflicted it.”

He quitted the camp without bidding farewell to any one; and he never drew bridle till he reached Heimburg. His noble steed fell dead from fatigue at the foot of the mountain. It was midnight.

Ida, the beautiful but hapless Ida, was awakened from a troubled sleep by the tramp of her incensed sire’s steed along the rocky valley at the base of the castle. She rose and looked forth from the casement of her chamber—she saw an armed knight ascend the rugged path to the portal with hasty steps—a minute more and he stood at the gate. She recognised her father; and, ere the warder had time to undo the massive bolts, she too was there to greet him.

“ Father! my dear, dear father!” she cried, as he stepped across the threshold; “ Father, my dear father, welcome!”

She made as though she would fling herself into his arms, and there nestle for awhile, overpowered as she was with emotions of joy, and, peradventure, too, of sorrow; but he repelled her sternly, and, in the presence of his assembled domestics, thus spake her:

“ Off, strumpet! no longer daughter of mine. Where is your seducer?—say at once, who is the villain, that I may drink his blood, as our heroes do wine from their enemies’ skulls in the halls of Valhalla.”*

“ Father! father!” said the hapless girl, “ I am guiltless of

* This was a well-known superstition of the Scandinavian Mythology.

sin; indeed, indeed I am. I have been belied. Believe not what they tell you. My heart is as pure as it was when it came from the hands of the gods. Freia be my witness that it is so."*

In vain did the fair but unfortunate Ida plead her innocence—in vain did she pray forgiveness from her incensed sire: her condition was too apparent to doubt of her acquaintance with a lover; and his secret was too well kept for her to discover his name or quality to her father.

"I'll tame thy obstinacy, if it cost thy worthless life," thundered forth her sire.

He twined his hands in her long yellow hair; and then dragged her to one of the lowest dungeons of the castle.

"Father! my father!" she shrieked in affright, "whither wouldst thou? This is not the way to my chamber. Oh, heaven! what would you with me? What place is this?"

They had reached their destination—a noisome den, dug fathoms deep into the bowels of the solid rock:—damps like those of the grave dropped from the roof and adown the rugged sides—and a foul stagnant vapour pervaded it, to such a pitch as to prevent the very torches from burning.

"Here," he spake, and he gnashed his teeth grimly the while, "here shall you dwell—the companion of toads—the neighbour of death—on the threshold of the tomb—in this antechamber of the grave—until you tell me, woman of the wanton heart! by whom has my name been dishonoured in your wretched person. And you shall know, besides, what it is to suffer chastisement at a father's hand."

As he spoke, he called aloud, and two serfs, deformed and malicious-looking beings, more like devils than men, speedily appeared.

"Scourge her till she faints," was the command he gave; and they executed it, all unmindful of her delicate sex and condition.

Six days in succession did this fearful outrage occur; and night after night the shrieks of the lovely Ida resounded through the dungeons. On the seventh she gave birth to a beautiful

* The Northern Venus, who was also the Scandinavian Pronuba.

babe, even while under the hands of her executioners; and then she died.

“ Father, my dear, dear father !” were her last words ; “ I die. Care for my baby, for he is the son of —— ”

Her miserable sire stamped his foot with rage as her breath momentarily failed her at the point of disclosing the name of her lover, he who had disgraced his blood.

“ Care for my boy, father,” she resumed, as if by a last effort ; “ I am innocent of guilt—he is lawfully begotten, and most nobly born. Care for him, as you value my forgiveness and your own life. He is the son of—Pharamund.”

In vain did the intemperate Sueno seek to recall existence to the mutilated body of his once lovely and still beautiful daughter ;—in vain was she borne from the dark den in which she had yielded up her gentle spirit to her own chamber ;—in vain were cares lavished on her corpse, restoratives applied to her lips, and repentant entreaties put up to her to return once again to life : —she was dead.

“ Whom the Gods love, die young.”

Spring came, like morning on the mountain tops, bringing joy in her lap to all nature ; but the cruel father of the murdered maiden never knew joy more. From the hour of her death he had lived, as it were, in a painful dream ; the only sign of consciousness he ever gave being in the presence of her orphan offspring. The battle-field was deserted by him ;—he returned not to resume his command ;—another chief had been appointed in his place ;—he was lost to every feeling save remorse : that, like the prophet's rod, swallowed up all other feelings and passions. The only words he spake were, “ Ida !” and, “ My daughter !”

A mighty tramp, as of a numerous body of horse, was, about this period, heard one morning in the valley of the castle ; and in a short space of time a princely retinue appeared at the gate.

“ Open for King Pharamund !” shouted a herald, who rode in advance of the squadrons.

The gates were flung wide ; and the *cortége* entered. Sir Sueno had been roused from his lethargy by the old familiar

sound of arms and armour, and trampling steeds; and he now stood at the portal of his castle to receive his royal guest and master. But he was a changed man from what that master had seen him last. Days had been to him even as ages:—remorse had wasted his stalwart form, and sorrow had blanched his raven hair. The king started back;—he could scarce believe his eyes. After the usual greetings and salutations were made, the monarch outspoke.

“ Sir Sueno, I joy to see thee; but one welcome, which I prize even more than thine, is a-wanting. Where is thy daughter?”

The old knight sunk his head, and was silent; that question had touched the chords of his heart, and caused him to relapse once more into his wonted moodiness of manner.

“ In battle and in banquet, in peace and in war, noble Sueno, have you stood beside me bravely,” continued the king, “ and henceforth we shall never more sunder. But where is thy daughter?”

Sir Sueno replied not;—he was all unconscious of the question;—his thoughts were in the dungeon where his beloved Ida died: he saw in idea the serfs scourge her; he heard her heart-rending shrieks for mercy; and he felt that he had shewn her none. Pharamund was astonished at his apathy; but attributing it to emotions of a different nature, he proceeded thus:

“ It is long since I loved thy daughter. Twelve moons and more have elapsed since she became my bride. In the presence of Freia alone were our nuptial ceremonies celebrated. I now come to claim her as my queen. Where is my Ida? Where is thy daughter?”

“ Dead!—dead!—I killed her!” sobbed the wretched sire. “ Dead! dead!”

Sir Sueno told her tale.

Pharamund was thunderstruck: he could not at first believe the miserable old man; but he was too soon convinced of the truth of his terrible story.

“ See, there is her grave,” said he; “ I had it made under my own chamber window, that I might have my guilt always present to my mind. It is untended, you may perceive; for I could not touch it myself; and no one dared to approach it but me.”

"It shall be the altar of my vengeance," said the king. "On it you shall die. Kneel!"

The old knight knelt on the lonely grave, among the thistles and rank weeds which thickly covered it: his face looked joyful; it was for the first time since his daughter's death.

"None but me shall be his executioner," cried the king, as thrice a thousand swords sprang from their scabbards to anticipate his intentions; "Mine, alas! is the loss—be mine alone the pleasure of vengeance."

His broad, bright glaive flashed like lightning through the air; and the next moment the ensanguined head and trunk of Ida's father fell on each side of her lowly grave.

"Lay them together," said Pharamund. "Death satisfies all feelings of hate. The tomb knows no animosities. He was brave as she was beautiful."

It was done even as the king directed.

Hiding his face in his hands—the babe of his beloved Ida in his arms—Pharamund then left the castle, followed by his chiefs.

Such is the legend of Heimbürg.

SONNECK.

The ruins of Sonneck Castle succeed, at a very short interval of space, on the same side of the Rhine. This castle is believed to have existed in its present condition since the year 1282, when it was destroyed by the Emperor Rudolph von Hapsburg as a *Raub Nest* (robbers' den). It is of a period anterior to this time, however, that the succeeding legend treats.

DEAD AND DAMNED.

In the days that are past, the lords of Sonneck were among the most powerful nobles on the banks of the Rhine. Graf Heinrich of that name, and Frederick, duke of Suabia, were closely connected. Once upon a time, as Duke Frederick, Count Albert von Simmera, Baron Bertold von Eberstein, and several other German knights and nobles, were at this castle, the following singular adventure occurred to Graf Heinrich von Sonneck:—

In those days, the Sonn forest encompassed the castle, and extended along the banks of the river, as well as into the interior of the country, for a considerable distance. Great sport was afforded to the visitants of the count on all occasions, by the abundance of game with which this forest was stocked. On the occasion in question, the noble count and his ducal visitor, accompanied by all the guests at the castle, had gone forth early one morning with the view of tracking to cover an immense stag which had been frequently seen in the forest, but which none of the foresters had hitherto been able to approach even to within bowshot of. The conversation at supper, the preceding evening, had turned upon this subject; and the result was a resolution to seek the animal the following morning. Such was the origin of the expedition. Long and painfully did they search for their prey in the deepest recesses of the forest; but they sought in vain. The dogs were at fault—the guides lost their way—the weather looked lowering—fatigue and an unsuccessful pursuit had damped the spirits of the whole party.

“Once more,” cried Graf Heinrich, “and then we’ll give it up if we be disappointed.”

“But how had we best proceed?” asked Duke Frederick.

“Suppose we separate,” said Albert von Simmera; “and that each follow the first track which offers.”

“We can meet here at the fall of eve,” observed Bertold von Eberstein.

“Done!” shouted all.

They separated accordingly; each pursuing an opposite path to that pursued by his neighbour.

Graf Heinrich rode on, rather annoyed at his ill-luck, and pondering on the best course to take to accomplish the end of their day’s amusement. As he proceeded, the forest became so much darker—the thickly intertwining branches being almost impervious to the light—that he could scarce credit his consciousness of the time being only early evening-tide in summer. At the gloomiest part of the wood, however, he was startled by a rustling among the brushwood which formed its basis; and, all of a sudden, he beheld the object of his search spring forth from its cover. It was a stately stag—a stag of ten—the noblest animal he had ever seen.

“Hurrah!” cried the count, as he buried his spurs in his jaded horse’s flanks. “Hurrah! for the chase!” and he cheered his hounds onward.

The stag sped like the wind; the count’s horse seemed to fly rather than run; the pursuit was as hot as hot could be; even the very dogs were distanced. In a moment the hunted animal was lost to his view; it had disappeared as if by magic; and the count, on looking around, found himself alone in a part of the forest which he never remembered to have seen before; and without any visible track or outlet from it. In this emergency, he wound his bugle until the woods rang again, in the hope of attracting the attention of some one or other of his companions. When the sound had ceased, he was all at once aware of the presence of a stranger who stood beside him, without his knowing whence or how he had come. The stranger was tall, of a noble aspect, and martial bearing; but his countenance was pale—deathly pale;—and his garb, which bore the smell of the mouldering grave about it, was of the fashion of centuries antecedent. He looked sadly on the face of Graf Heinrich; but still his gaze had nothing of life in it.

“Who art thou?” asked the terrified count. “What would you? Whence come ye?”

It was with some difficulty that he could muster courage thus to address the fearful stranger. His hair stood on end; his blood curdled in his veins; his limbs tottered; his strength failed; he could scarcely breathe. It seemed as though he were conscious of the presence of something supernatural.

“Fear not,” replied the fearful stranger; “I come not to harm, but to serve thee. I am sent to shew you strange things. Be of good heart, and follow me.”

His voice was like that of the dead, rising from a ruined sepulchre.

The count had no alternative; for an invisible power seemed to impel him. He followed the footsteps of his guide in silence. Fain would he have turned away; but all power had departed from him. They pursued their way through the tangled thicket without impediment; the densest part of the underwood appeared to open itself to them, as it were, spontaneously. Graf Heinrich was lost in wonder. All at once they emerged from the gloom

of the forest into the brightness of day. The sun was setting behind a mass of vermillion and gold-tinted clouds ; each blade of the long grass which covered the green sward they trode on, cast its own particular shadow ; and a soft breeze blew like balm about their temples. No scene could be sweeter ; no change more acceptable.

“ Behold !” said the stranger, solemnly.

The count looked up, and his wonder was at its height ; for he saw before him a stately castle glittering in the rays of the setting sun, and glancing as though its walls were of virgin gold. He rubbed his eyes. Never had he seen or heard of such a scene or such a castle in his lifetime ; and yet he was convinced that he knew every recess of the forest—every corner in it—from his boyhood. Was it a dream ? He was soon to see.

They proceeded onwards. When they arrived at the castle-gate, the stranger laid his hand on the bridle of Count Henry’s horse. The steed stood as if changed into stone ; that touch seemed to have rendered his limbs rigid as death.

“ Alight,” said the stranger.

Count Henry alighted. He had scarcely stepped to the ground, when two grooms, garbed in a most antique manner, made their appearance ; and, in obedience to a gesture of his guide, led the horse to a side-court of the castle, into what seemed to be a stable. They looked like resuscitated corpses ; and they never spoke a word. As the count and the stranger approached the principal entrance of the castle, they were met by many beings similar to these grooms in clothing and in appearance.

“ These are the menials,” observed the guide to his trembling charge. “ Speak not to them at all, nor to any one else here ; but follow me, and do exactly as I desire you.”

The count bowed his acquiescence ; for he could find no words wherewith to express it : his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and refused, through very fear, to perform its office. The stranger seemed satisfied.

They entered the castle. A long train of menials marshalled them to the great hall. They then entered this apartment. It was a vast room, rich in all the architectural ornaments of the early period of the German empire. Adown the centre of it, from

end to end, ran a long table covered with viands; at one extremity of which sat a middle-aged man, of a most noble aspect and bearing; and at the sides of which were seated various other persons. They were all dressed in the style of other days; and the scene looked like a pageant of past times, in which a prince and his court were introduced on the mimic scene as at an entertainment. But the death-pale aspect of all present—the lifeless glitter of their stony eyes, as they turned their heads on the new-comer—and the oppressive stillness—deep as that of the grave—which pervaded the spacious apartment, belied the supposition. The count and the stranger, or, rather, the stranger and the count—for the former preceded him—advanced towards the head of the table. As they approached it, he who was seated there, and seemed to be the chief of the fearful actors in this awful drama, rose and bowed profoundly to the count. All the rest, thereupon, arose too, and bowed likewise. This done, they resumed their occupation of banqueting; which they did with much gusto; the viands and drink seeming to be swallowed with a wondrous alacrity. Heinrich looked on in silence and deep amaze. The marvel in his mind was how they could consume so much, without any apparent diminution in the quantity which covered the table.

It might be a good quarter of an hour that he thus stood, without advancing or receding one step, and without attracting a single iota more of the attention of those at the table, when his guide again beckoned him to follow. He followed; and his mind felt relieved at every step he took from that strange scene. They traversed once more the long corridors by which they had entered, still preceded and followed by the same throng of marshalling menials, until they reached the principal court-yard of the castle. The stranger then waved his hand, and the menials disappeared; but in their stead the two ghastly grooms once more emerged from the stable, leading the horse of the count without the walls through the gateway by which he had obtained admission.

“Up,” said the stranger, holding the stirrup for the count to mount his steed.

The count was astride without volition; and hardly with consciousness.

“Follow me,” was all the stranger uttered, until they ar-

rived once more at that part of the forest where he had first appeared to the count. As before, nothing seemed to have power to impede their straightforward course ; for the brushwood yielded to their touch like meadow grass ; and obstacles of all kinds—rocks, and rivulets, and dells—were surmounted by them with inconceivable ease and rapidity. The stranger still strode before the count ; and he kept on at such a pace as to be always ahead of the horse, notwithstanding that the noble animal was ever at the top of its speed, all through that marvellous journey. As they stood on the spot of meeting, the spell which had chained the speech of the count seemed all at once broken. He inquired of his guide who he was ; whose was the castle they had visited ; and what might be those whom they had seen there ?

“ The chief of those you saw,” answered the stranger, “ was your great-great-grandfather. It was he who sat at the head of the table. In his lifetime he was a very valiant knight ; and did good service against the infidels in Palestine in the second crusade. But, like you, he neglected his vassals ;—he turned a deaf ear to their cries ;—and he only saw and heard their cases through the eyes and ears of his feudatories and menial servants. It was the interest of these to oppress them ; and they did not spare any means to wring from them the last drop of sweat and blood. So it is with you and your feudaries and followers. To punish his neglect, and our cruelties—for, alas ! I was one of the offenders in my lifetime—God has condemned us to the doom you partly witnessed. But know, oh count, that the food you saw was like the apples of Sodom, beautiful to look at, but bitter as dust and ashes to the taste ; while, oh ! the drink was fluid fire. Besides this, our hearts are for ever consuming within us, without any hope on our parts that they will ever be consumed.”

As he said this, he put aside the fold of his doublet ; and, sure enough, there was his heart seen through his skeleton-ribs, glowing all the same as a fierce fire through the grating of a furnace. The count was ready to sink to the earth with horror ; his spirit almost died within him at the sight.

“ By a special providence,” pursued the phantom, “ it is permitted to us to make these things known to you ; to the end that you may alter your present mode of life, and pay more heed to the condition of those dependent on you.”

The grisly being ceased for a moment ; and then waving his hand, and pointing to an opening through the forest, which the count now perceived for the first time, he thus concluded :—

“Wend thy way homewards by yon path. You will meet your friends on the road. Tarry not ; and take warning. Once more, ere you depart, behold !”

The phantom pointed in the direction of the castle they had come from. The count's eyes involuntarily followed his finger. While he looked, the figure melted away into thin air. It was only the work of a moment. He was gone. But the place where that proud edifice so lately stood was now one reeking mass of smoke, fire, and flame, which seemed to rise from an unfathomable abyss below, like an eruption from the crater of an active volcano ; while the crackling of the fire, the hissing of the flame, and the explosions which ever and anon took place within it, were mingled with an unceasing sound of wailing and woe, as though it came from all the suffering souls in hell, so full was it of supernatural anguish and unearthly sorrow.

Graf Heinrich hastened homewards. On the road he met with his friends. But they scarcely recognised his countenance ; for the dark locks he was, a few hours previously, so proud of, and the comely beard which curled, jet-black and glossy as the raven's back, adown his manly breast, were now both white as snow. He told them the cause ; and narrated minutely all that had occurred to him. From thenceforward he did every thing in his power to make his vassals happy ; and, in the course of years, he died, regretted as a fond father by all who were dependent on him.

DREYECKSHAUSEN.

Dreyeckshausen, Dreckhausen, Drechshausen, or Trechtlingshausen,—for by all these appellations is this little village known—lies at the base of the hill on which Sonneck stands, and was originally termed Trajana Castra, from a fortified camp of Trajan's which was pitched there ; thence, according to Freyherus,* by an easy corruption, the derivation of its present

* Origin. Palat. Omissis, part ii.

name. It was greatly celebrated for its growth of wine in the middle of the seventeenth century;* but it has not sustained its reputation in this respect since that period.

ST. CLEMENT'S CHURCH.

Close to the edge of the river, shaded by towering walnut-trees, stands the ruined church of St. Clement. High above it grimly frown the renovated castle of Rheinstein, and the crumbling ruins of Reichenstein,—of which more anon,—looking down on the river like giant guardians of the rocky pass through which it rolls its troubled waters. The following legend is related of this church and its first foundation:—

A fair maiden, young, beautiful, and accomplished, virtuous, good, and rich, dwelt, ages ago, in the valley of Sauerthal.† In the castle of Rheinstein, then one of the most formidable robber-fortresses on the Rhine, lived Sir Hugo, a fierce, lawless oppressor of the poor; a ruthless spoliator of the rich; a heartless foe to honest industry; and an unrelenting enemy to the peace, order, and tranquillity of his neighbourhood. The maiden's charms fired his wicked passions; and he longed also for her wide possessions. He preferred his suit for her hand; but she was not to be won by such as he; for his character had preceded him. It would be as though the lion should mate with the lamb, if she had yielded to his offer, and consented to be his bride. Unused to resistance, foaming with rage, mortified pride, disappointed sensuality, and defeated avarice, he resolved to resort to violence, and carry her off against her will. This resolution was no sooner taken than he proceeded to put it in execution. Summoning his retainers, he entered her castle by surprise, and seized on the hapless maiden; and then stifling her cries for assistance, and heedless of her prayers and tears for pity and release, he bore her to his bark, which lay moored off Lorch, and quickly set sail across the river for his own impregnable fortress of Rheinstein. But a sudden storm arose just as they reached the centre

* Merian, Topog. Archiep. Mogunt. Trevir. et Colon., p. 19.

† The valley of the Sauerthal, so named from some sour mineral springs which it contains, is a continuation of the Whisper-Dell. The latter ends where the former begins—at the Chapel of the Cross, about a quarter of a league from Lorch, on the banks of the Rhine.

of the stream ; as though Providence had directly interfered to protect innocence and virtue from vice and unscrupulous power. It was a storm such as no man on board the bark had ever before witnessed. A tempest swept over the broad bosom of the water ; the waves ran mast high ; all above suddenly became as dark as night ; the thunder roared amid the mountains, and was echoed back a thousand times from their rocky recesses ; the sheeted lightning flashed fearfully athwart the dense gloom ; and the cataracts of the heavens seemed opened, such a deluge of rain rushed into the open bark, and foamed up on the black crests of the boiling river. Sir Hugo and his ruthless minions gave themselves up for lost ; there seemed no possibility of escape from inevitable destruction for any on board. In this emergency the maiden vowed a vow that she would build a church in honour of St. Clement, on the projecting point of shore off which the bark was about to founder, if he vouchsafed to deliver her from the double danger with which she was then menaced—a watery grave for her youth, or, worse still, the fate which awaited her, if they reached the castle of her ravisher in safety. The wicked knight and his wild followers gazed on her silently. Despair was in their pale visages. They had no hope in the hour of danger ; for never had they shewn mercy to their fellow-creatures, when they had it in their power to bestow it. They had no trust in Heaven, no faith in the comforts of religion in the season of sorrow or of dread ; for they were even as the wolves which infested the rocky valleys of the river, ignorant and bestial in their hearts, cruel and sanguinary in their habits. Yet were they something touched with the intense devotion of the maiden. What will not faith do ?

Her prayer was heard. The saint suddenly appeared, walking, as it were, on the face of the raging waters in perfect safety. He was clothed in his episcopal habit : and held the crozier in his left hand. When he reached the sinking bark he put forth his right-hand to the maiden. She clasped it eagerly, and stepped from the deck of the barque upon the boiling waves of the river in full confidence of protection and security. She was not deceived ; saints are not like men ; they excite no expectations that they do not satisfy. She traversed the raging billows by his side as though she was passing over newly shorn mea-

dows in spring, or the soft green sward on a still lake's side. When she stood on the shore safe, and thankful to Heaven for her rescue, she turned round to express her gratitude to her beatified deliverer. But he was gone; she wist not when, nor how, nor whither. One glance on the river sufficed for the rest. The bark, with all the sinful men which it contained, after a momentary struggle with the fury of the elements, was swallowed up in the yawning gulf which gaped below to receive it. A shrill shriek rose above the voice of the tempest, and overpowered even the raging of the waves; it was the death-cry of the drowning crew. She heard no more.

When the storm had subsided, she re-crossed the river under the guidance of some honest fishermen; and in a few days after set about fulfilling her vow. That church is the remains of its completion.

ASMANNSHAUSEN.

Asmannshausen, on the right bank of the Rhine, lying nearly opposite St. Clement's church, is only a small village; but it is, notwithstanding, famous all over Europe as the only place where red Rhenish wine is manufactured.

FALKENBURG.

The frowning ruins of Falkenburg gloom down darkly on the Rhine, which flows in a full, deep, strong current, at the foot of the rugged acclivity on which they are situated. The early history of these ruins is similar to that of others their neighbours; and the legendary lore connected with them consists of the succeeding wild tale.

RETRIBUTION.

The lovely Liba sat at her spinning-wheel, and ever and anon looked anxiously from the balcony of her bower on the path which led from the old oak forest behind to the castle of Falkenburg.

She loved Guntram, a young and noble knight of the neighbouring district ; and she was beloved by him in return with the most ardent affection. It was for his coming she waited and watched so anxiously. He had been absent from her for a considerable while, and he was now about to absent himself longer ; for he was compelled, by the terms of his tenure, to receive the enfeoffment of his lands and possessions at the hands of the prince palatine himself, as soon as he should be of age to do so. That event had just occurred ; and he had made all necessary preparations for a journey to the court of the upper palatinate. The day and hour he had fixed for a farewell to the lady of his love had arrived ; and she momentarily expected his arrival too, with mingled sensations of pleasure and of anguish ;—pleasure at his presence, and anguish at their near separation. She was at her window a full hour before the time of appointment. As she sat and gazed on the sweet scene below, unconscious of all save the thoughts that filled her mind, the rapid tramp of a horse struck on her ear : a minute more, and the waving plumes of her Guntram's morion were visible. She rushed to the door, and was clasped in his arms. Their meeting was fond, but their parting was sad. Both seemed overwhelmed with grief, though each endeavoured to conquer it by the aid of reason. All would not do. Liba felt her heart fail within her ; an undefinable dread hung over her ; the future looked clouded and ominous ; in short, she had a strong presentiment that they were parting for ever. Guntram was also dejected and downcast, notwithstanding all his efforts to appear gay ; and, though he tried to console her, it was quite evident that he needed consolation himself as much as ever she did. Love even was unable to dissipate the unaccountable sorrow which weighed down their spirits : for hope appeared to have departed from their hearts ! They separated : he promising to return in fourteen days at the furthest, when they would meet to part no more. It need not be said that it was Guntram's firm determination to keep inviolate his plighted promise. His heart was in Falkenburg with Liba, though he was compelled to be absent in person from her presence. But fate willed it otherwise. He was doomed to disappointment. On his arrival at the court, he found the prince palatine engaged in making preparations for the despatch of an immediate embassy to Burgundy ; and, to his great

mortification, he had not been long known to his sovereign before he was selected as the ambassador. This selection he owed as much to his handsome face and figure as to the qualities of his mind, the nobility of his birth, and the elegance of his manners. He could not resist the commands of his prince, or gainsay an appointment which he appeared to have so set his heart upon. An affectionate letter informed his Liba of his unwilling detention from her; and assured her of his eternal love, and truth, and constancy. He then departed on his mission. Six months were spent in the journey and at the court of Burgundy, then one of the proudest in Europe. At the end of that period, the object of his mission being attained, he and his retinue set out on their return to the Rhine. One day, as it drew towards evening, they discovered that they had deviated from their road; and though they made every effort to recover it, they were entirely unsuccessful. Night soon fell; it was pitch dark. They were then in an immense forest, with no visible outlet; and it was with much difficulty that they could proceed, so thickly was the undergrowth of shrubs, briars, and brushwood interwoven with the boles and branches of the trees. In a short time, Guntram discovered that he was alone. All his followers had fallen off, some straying one way, and some another, in the darkness and confusion which prevailed. He wandered on anxiously for a little while; at length his ears were gladdened with the gurgle of a brook. Spurring his noble steed, who seemed as conscious of the pleasure he felt as he did himself, they soon reached its edge. It was a small rapid stream, which bent round the base of a hill, nearly encircling it. Guntram gazed about him for a moment, to ascertain the best course he could pursue: and then casting his eyes upwards, he beheld the black walls and dimly seen turrets of an old castle, standing grimly on the summit of the mount, relieved against the black sky by their own intenser blackness. He approached it, and prayed shelter of the warden for the night; and his prayer was at once granted when he had announced his name and the object of his journey. The servitors led him to a spacious apartment, hung all over with family portraits and other pictures, and there left him, until they made known his arrival to their master. Guntram occupied the time until their return with an inspection of the pictures. They appeared to

portray many things which had occurred to the possessors of the castle—to be a sort of pictorial family history. One exhibited the imposing ceremony of founding a church ; another, a mortal combat, in which a Christian knight, single-handed, seemed engaged against a crowd of fierce-looking Saracens, fighting for life and death, but evidently having the advantage over them ; while a third shewed the same brave warrior having exchanged his sword for a pilgrim's staff, clothed in the garb of a palmer on his weary way through Palestine. Above these, the portraits of the first of the noble family to which the castle appertained, were painted on panels, in the regular order of their succession to the title and estates.

Guntram had well nigh examined the whole of these pictures ; but just as he finished his circuit of the apartment, he came upon one which hung in a dark corner, almost completely concealed from the light. A black curtain was drawn over it, as if to exclude it still further from view. His curiosity was excited : he wondered what it could be that was thus hidden : the richness of the frame precluded the idea that it was a worthless production. He paused before it for a moment : an indefinable feeling of dread crept over him. He drew the curtain, and the portrait of a most beautiful maiden, standing beside an open grave, met his view. She seemed young and fresh as if she lived and moved : and her eyes looked love and pleasure upon the spectator. She appeared occupied in arranging her long fair hair, which fell in waving folds, like billows of light, over her full, round, perfectly formed neck and shoulders. Guntram was astonished at this picture : he could not, for the life of him, make out its meaning ; but he gazed and gazed on it, till he felt that his heart was fascinated with the fair maiden. At this juncture the lord of the castle entered the apartment, and bade him a hearty welcome to his abode. His name was Sir Bobo, an aged knight, the last branch of an ancient stock, whose flowers and leaves had all fallen off ; a care-worm consumed the strength of his life, and destroyed the principle of his vitality. The quick, hot current of his blood, was now quite frozen, or sluggishly flowed on through his wasted frame. He looked so like a corpse, that his sleep seemed death ; so wan, so wo-begone, so shadowy did he appear to the youth. But his feelings were not

frozen, his heart was not dead, for he greeted Guntram warmly, and gave orders that every suitable refreshment should be at once provided, and all due honours paid to him by his numerous domestics. He sat with the young knight, pleased with his conversation, and interested in its details, until the midnight hour had chimed from the turrets of the castle; then he departed, commending him to all the saints, and wishing him sweet repose. An old servant of the castle conducted Guntram to his chamber. The way thither lay through a long, vaulted gallery; dim, damp, dreary, and cheerless in the extreme. It seemed to have been seldom traversed by human foot; for the narrow arched windows, deeply coved in the thick walls, were covered and almost concealed by spider's webs, which looked as though they had existed there undisturbed for years; and ever and anon a drowsy bat flew across their path, attracted by the faint flicker of the light, flapping heavily his broad weighty wings, as though but just awakened from a sleep of ages. Guntram felt disquieted; his heart almost died within him; and yet he knew not why or wherefore it should be so.

"Sir Knight," said the old servant who accompanied him, "you may almost imagine that you are in a haunted castle, where only ghosts and goblins dwell, such is now the look of desolation which these halls wear."

Guntram made no answer to this observation: and the old man proceeded:

"But my lord is now childless, and he has no longer aught to connect him with this world."

Still was Guntram silent; for he was busied with his own thoughts.

"It is now thirty years," continued the old man, "since his only daughter, his loveliest and his last child, the beautiful Erlinda, died in the very chamber where you are going to spend the night."

Guntram started: his attention was now charmed. The identity of the portrait with the subject of the old man's story, flashed upon him like lightning.

"Since then," the old man went on, "the castle has nearly gone to ruin. My lord has almost allowed it to fall about his ears without caring. There are few habitable rooms in it now;

indeed the only one fit for the reception of a stranger is that in which you are going to sleep. But that is not of much importance after all: for strangers so seldom pass this way, that you are the first who has entered these walls for the last five years come Christmas."

They had by this time quitted the long gallery and entered the chamber. Guntram, whose mind was greatly excited by the conversation of the old man and the picture with which he had coupled it in his imagination, would willingly have detained him for the purpose of obtaining further particulars of the subject which now so much interested him; but his informant appeared so very anxious to avoid saying any thing more on it, that he gave up all hope of succeeding with him. When the old man had put every thing to rights, and seen that his master's guest was as well circumstanced as he could make him, he wished him a good night. He paused, however, at the door of the chamber, and, with a mysterious look, whispered, rather than spoke, to the young knight:

"Perhaps you may hear a little noise in your chamber in the course of the night; but let not that alarm you. Make the sign of the cross if you do; and then repeat a *pater* and *ave*. There is no real danger."

With these words he closed the door and departed. The echo of his receding footsteps soon ceased in the vaulted gallery; and Guntram felt he was quite alone. It was in vain that the young knight tried to smile at the fears which hung heavily on his heart: a shuddering sensation overcame him, notwithstanding all his efforts to avert it; and he could think of nothing but the ghost of the fair maiden who stood by the open grave. The storm which raged without, and the winds which howled within, through the long corridors of the castle, contributed not a little to increase his fears. It was a superstitious age; and he cannot be blamed for the involuntary feeling which unmanned him at the moment. In accordance with the old servant's good advice, he knelt down and prayed a prayer to the Lord and the Virgin Mother. He then crossed himself on mouth, brow, and breast; and, trimming his tapers, threw himself in a large arm-chair which stood on the ample hearth of the chamber. He could not sleep, even if he had gone to bed: but he would not go to bed; because it was in

it that the maiden with the long, fair hair, the old man's last and loveliest child, had died. His mind soon became a chaos of hopes and fears: he did not know what to do with himself. After he had tossed and tumbled about in his chair for a good while, a sort of lethargic sensation seemed, on a sudden, to enchain his limbs: he was restless now no longer; but lay as calm and as quiet as a sleeping infant on its mother's breast. Yet was he painfully conscious of all that passed: his mental faculties becoming intensely quickened. As he lay thus he heard a slight rustling in the next chamber; then the sound of a light foot-fall was distinctly audible; and immediately after a soft, sweet, female voice sang, with fulness and great purity, an old song, to a most melting, ancient melody. Guntram started up: he was free once more.

"That is no phantom's voice," said he to himself; "I see how it is. The old fellow has got some pretty girl concealed here, whom he is anxious that I should not discover; and so he has invented a ghost-story to deceive me. I am not to be caught in that trap, though. We shall soon see."

Full of this idea, and anticipating great pleasure, as much from circumventing the old deceiver, as he believed him to be, as from the company of the fair one with the sweet voice, he stole forth the chamber. His intention was, first to peep through the key-hole of her bower, and when he had satisfied himself as to her desirableness, then to endeavour to obtain admission. But he was frustrated in the former, though he found the latter more easy of accomplishment than he had calculated on. The door of her chamber was wide ajar,—half-open; and a lamp, which burned on a tripod, lighted up the entire apartment. Before a large mirror, which stood on a table, nearly central in the chamber, her back to the entrance, sat a lovely young female, arranging her long fair hair, and seeming to contemplate, with complacency and great pleasure, their wavy folds, as she ever and anon flung them gracefully over her glossy shoulders. She looked very beautiful. Guntram was struck dumb with astonishment: surprise almost paralyzed him; he could neither use his tongue nor his limbs; but stood gazing on her, open-eyed and stirless, as a statue. He made once, as though he would speak to her; but the thought that he had no business there, at such a time and under such circumstances, overcame his resolution.

After many struggles with himself, and as many repulses, he gave up the thoughts of introducing himself to her notice; and stole back again with a light step, but a heavy heart, to his own apartment. Arrived there, he flung himself on the bed; but sleep fled his eyes: for the lovely maiden with the long fair hair was ever present to his imagination; and he felt that his heart was entangled as by a magical fascination. Thus spent he the remainder of the night.

Next morning the old servant entered his apartment, and asked him anxiously how he had passed the night; but Guntram evaded an answer, for he did not wish to communicate to any one what he had witnessed. He descended to the great hall, and breakfasted with Sir Bobo. The old knight became more and more pleased with his young friend; and at length prayed him to tarry a few days longer in the castle. Guntram gladly acquiesced, for he wished to see more of the maiden of the past night: though he had scarcely done so when the form of his Liba seemed to rise before his eyes, and look reproachfully on him for his faithlessness. That day was spent in exploring the grounds around the castle, and examining its vicinity. While thus occupied, he found himself following a lonely path, which led through a dense, drear, thorny thicket; and which all of a sudden brought him to a small chapel, that lay deep sunk in a hollow of the wood. Nettles and thistles, and docks and darnels, and all other foul and obscene weeds, covered its walls, filled its roofless area, and crowded the narrow space on which it stood. A huge oak had taken root in the aisle; and its branches over-canopied the scattered fragments of the altar; while on each side its sinewy arms stretched far out through the shattered casements. The spot was the very image of desolation. Near to the desecrated altar, within the choir, were many monuments to the departed; and close beside it was an open grave, considerably apart from any of those having tombstones. The stone for this grave leaned against the chapel-wall at its head. On it were engraven the words:

TRAVELLER,
PRAY FOR ME,
THAT I MAY REST IN PEACE:
BUT
BEWARE OF MY GLANCES.

Guntram read this strange inscription over and over again ; he could not guess its meaning, do what he might. At last he bethought him of the picture covered with the black curtain, and of the fair maiden with the long hair, sitting beside the open grave, portrayed in it ; and then the mystery seemed almost fathomed. A slight shudder seized him as the connexion between both rushed on his conviction ; and, for a moment, the old castle and all it contained became to him objects of suspicion and dread. He also thought of his dear Liba, and of the promise he had plighted to her : and he resolved to set out on his journey that very evening. But, unluckily for him, on his return to the castle he found Sir Bobo was not at home, having gone forth until the next day ; and as he could not, in common courtesy, depart without seeing and thanking him in person for his hospitable entertainment, he was even compelled to make up his mind to spend another night under his roof. In due course he retired to his chamber. He had not been long seated in the arm-chair which he occupied the preceding night, when he heard again the same slight rustle as he did before, the same light foot-fall succeeding it, and immediately after the same sweet voice singing the same song which had already so enraptured him. But the voice was still more melodious than it had seemed to him on the former occasion ; and he felt himself, as it were, irresistibly attracted by it to the adjacent apartment. As heretofore the door stood ajar, half-open : and the maiden sat in the same place, in the same attitude, and engaged in the same occupation as when he had last seen her. But she looked to his eyes far more beautiful than before. A thin, gauze night-gown rather exhibited than concealed her faultless form—the unequalled grace of her lovely limbs ; and her eyes, which he looked on in the reflection of the mirror, seemed to swim and float in voluptuous melancholy. What could it mean ? He was unable to subdue his feelings any longer ; his soul was on fire : he burned to embrace the beauty. He entered the apartment : she turned round slowly, and gazed calmly on him for a moment. But what a gaze : and what a moment for him ! He was lost. A few words of apology for his intrusion —disjointed, unconnected, and without meaning—were all he could stammer out, so confounded was he with his passion and the awkwardness of his position. But he soon felt

re-assured by the smile with which she saluted him, and the deep attention that she paid to his protestations of love. She listened, but spake not a syllable. He went on. From apologies he proceeded to questions ; as his natural confidence again returned to him. Yet did she not answer any thing to all he said ;—no sound escaped her lips. When he ceased she pointed to the black marble table at which she sat, and beckoned him to approach. He did so ; and read on it this inscription :

I MUST BE SILENT.

LOVE CAN BIND ME: LOVE CAN LOOSE ME.

Guntram was astounded : he pondered on the import of the words ; he tried, but in vain, to fathom the meaning of the mystery. The fair maiden gazed on him with a saddened eye ; that gaze, however, penetrated to his inmost heart. He was again, in a moment, the ardent lover. It was but the work of an instant to clasp her hand and press it to his lips ; she offered no resistance to this proof of his ardent passion. He kissed her cheek—and she was still also : he kissed her mouth—and he was unopposed by a single repulsive look or motion. Liba was forgotten : he was ruined. The maiden drew from a secret drawer in the table an antique wedding-ring ; she then reached it forth to the young knight. In the intoxication of the moment he placed it upon his fore-finger ; and then again he clasped her to his bounding bosom. At that instant, a screech-owl flapped its wings heavily against the casement, and hooted fearfully. The maiden, on hearing the sound, disengaged herself hastily from his embraces—imprinted a fond kiss on his lips, and disappeared, at once, through a side-door which seemed to lead to a small chamber, off the apartment in which they sate together.

The young knight returned to his own apartment and threw himself on the bed ; but the tumult of his thoughts prevented the approach of sleep ; and he lay tossing and tumbling in a fever of agitation until morning. With the first dawn of day, reason resumed her sway over him ; and, under her influence, he resumed his determination of departing from the castle. He would, he resolved, just bid a brief farewell to his hospitable old host ; and then set out without more delay on his homeward journey. He did so accordingly ; and accordingly departed. It

was only when his impatient steed had carried him into the deepest recesses of the forest — far, far out of sight of the crumbling towers of that old castle,—that he felt lightened of the load of sorrowful foreboding, which seemed to weigh heavily on his oppressed heart.

The forest, however, was soon cleared; and the open country gained. There were some peasants at work in the fields. He alighted from his horse, and, requesting refreshment for the jaded animal, he mixed himself with them in their mid-day meal; he then extended himself under the shadow of a tree, until the hour for resuming their labours should arrive. A conversation soon ensued. It was general at first; but it shortly became connected exclusively with the subject which most occupied his mind—the old castle of Waldburg and its inhabitants. He asked an aged husbandman a few questions respecting them.

“It is an awful place,” said the old peasant, shaking his gray locks, and looking very grave; “It is an awful place, Sir Knight; and a fearful history is that of the present family.”

Guntram besought him earnestly to say all he knew of it; and, after a little hesitation, the old man proceeded:—

“Sir Bobo, the present lord of the castle of Waldburg, had an only daughter, the beautiful Erlinda, as she was called—it is now some thirty years since. She was wooed by many rich and handsome knights, from far and wide; for the fame of her beauty had spread all over the land: but she was haughty and foolish—she was a spoiled child—a wild, wayward, unwise damsel, and she would have none of them for a husband. She required such extraordinary, such dangerous proofs of their devotion for her, that few would give them; and the few who tried the experiment, paid the forfeit of their lives for their temerity. All of them left her but one: he abode by her still when the rest had departed. The only son of an aged mother, whose sole hope he was on this earth, he was in so far like the proud lady he would fain have made his bride: but in so far only—for in nothing else was he similar to her; he being good, kind, and pious; and loving his fellow-creatures with the affection of a brother. He was of an ancient and a noble race; and was, moreover, unexceptionable in wealth and power, in form and figure, in mind and in manners. Undeterred by the fate of his predecessors,

he offered himself to the accomplishment of any proof of his love which she required, on condition that their nuptials should immediately be celebrated on its completion. She agreed to this condition; for he had won considerably on her esteem. The proof she required was, that on the next Walpurgis Night,* he should station himself, at twelve o'clock, in the centre of the cross-roads on the Konigsbahn, and there stay until the morning. And, further, that he should give her, the following day, a full and particular account of all that he had heard and seen on that occasion. All this seemed such child's play to the lover, that he leaped at once at the proposal: nay, more, to shew that he thought it so, he went to the place appointed without arms of any kind, offensive or defensive; not even a switch did he carry with him. The succeeding day search was made for him, as he did not return at the specified time; and he was found torn to pieces, the fragments of his body being scattered about in different and distant directions. Some concluded that the evil spirits, who specially make that night their own, had done the dreadful deed: while others decided that he had been set upon by a troop of hungry wolves; in which opinion they were much confirmed by the circumstance, that only a portion of his remains were discoverable, notwithstanding all their efforts to collect them for Christian burial. His poor, old, childless mother, on the news of her bereavement reaching her, fell mortally ill. In her last moments, with her dying breath, she cursed—with a mother's curse—the proud maiden who had caused it, and predicted her future misery. That curse was of quick effect; that prediction was speedily fulfilled. Exactly nine days after the death of this aged lady, Erlinda also fell ill. She felt that her fate was sealed; and the consciousness that she would never again rise from her couch of sickness wholly filled her mind. Within nine days after she died. When the preparations for her funeral were completed—the grave opened—the tombstone ready to cover it—to the great horror and dismay of those on whom the duty of interment devolved, her corpse could not be found. It had disappeared from the chamber in which it lay—none knew how or whither."

* May-Eve.

Guntram slightly shuddered; for he recollected the open grave in the ruined chapel; and also the mysterious tombstone which stood against the wall at its head.

"Since then," continued the old man, "she haunts the castle, especially the chambers in which she lived and died. Those who have seen her say that she looks the same as she did when alive; that she is also dressed in the same manner; and that there is nothing at all of death in her appearance. She still seeks to captivate all strangers who may make the castle their residence; and it matters not to her what may be their quality, so that they yield to her fascination. But woe be to them that fall into her net! They die without fail in thrice nine days from the time they become entangled by her: there is no hope for them."

Guntram was horror-struck. He sighed heavily; and cast down his eyes in deep thought.

"Whoever shall resist her seductions," concluded the aged narrator, "will be her best benefactor: he will give her troubled spirit rest. Until then she is doomed to know no repose."

Guntram now saw all. He felt as if a mountain was removed from his heart—such relief had the old man's relation afforded him. The mystery was at an end. He glanced at the ring—the gift of the ghost—which was still on his finger. Horror-struck he read on it these words

"THOU ART MINE."

They were in distinctly legible characters. All was over with him. It was in vain to struggle any longer with his destiny: so he even resigned himself calmly to his fate.

He resumed his journey. His path now lay through a thick pine forest; and it came on dark night before he could extricate himself from its recesses. The scene around was as still as the grave; silence sat on all things; not a twig stirred, not a leaf rustled; there was not even a single breath of air in the heavens. For a while he pursued the rugged path, in the hopes of finding a forest-inn; but the further he proceeded the less hope there seemed to be of reaching it, if one existed at all in this wilderness. The path, too, became more and more obstructed; until at

length every trace of it was effaced, and all his efforts could no longer recover it. Still he urged forward his weary steed ; for he had now no other alternative ; except that of passing the night alone in this dreary wood,—unprotected and unsheltered. After some time thus spent, he suddenly came upon a Hun-fort ; one of those remnants of barbarian encampment which are still to be found in almost all parts of Germany.* A large fire stood in the centre of the circular space enclosed by the crumbling outworks of the ruin ; and three withered old hags were jumping round the flame, hand in hand, in the most fantastic manner. Guntram reined in his steed ; and, retreating to the shadow of a thick clump of trees, gazed earnestly on their strange proceedings. He had a presentiment that he was, somehow or other, mixed up with them. Their dance done, one of the hags, in a croaking voice,—like that of an old raven,—sang the following verse :—

“ Nettles three I’ve torn to-day,
From yon giant’s grave away ;
Out of these a thread I’ve spun :
Sisters, see !—my work is done.”

A second then took up the strain, in a still more discordant tone, and proceeded :—

“ In tears I’ll seeth it—I’ll feed it with groans ;
My loom and shuttle be dead men’s bones,—
With which I’ll weave five ells, so free,
Of linen fine, as ye shall see.”

The third thus concluded the fearful strain :—

“ A ahroud to make I’ll then begin,
Fit to fold sleeping bridegroom in :
Sir knight, ride slowly, for d’ ye see,
When finished, we will fetch it thee.”

In another moment, fire and hags and all had disappeared ; and Guntram felt as if he had awoke from a horrid dream. His heart was sad ; his brain a vortex, where all was confusion. Setting spurs to his steed away he flew over hedge and hollow, through brushwood, thicket, and brier, and never held hand or drew rein until he had reached the forest-inn, which he had before so vainly

* There are many similar remains of barbarian antiquity in Ireland ; the common people call them Danish forts. England has some also.

sought ; the noble animal reeking with foam, and he, himself, nearly sinking to the ground with fatigue of mind and body. He slept a troubled sleep during the remainder of that night.

Early in the following morning he resumed his route ; and at the close of the day reached Falkenburg—the castle where dwelt the ladye of his love,—full of hope and expectation of pleasure. As he rode across the drawbridge he saw two men precede him, without perceiving whence they came ; and between them he saw borne before him a black coffin. They passed through the archway of the portcullis ; and disappeared at once from his view. He called aloud to them to stop, for the sight excited his fears for the safety of his Liba ; but they paid no attention whatever to his cries. He then asked the warders which way they went ; but the warders only shook their heads, and said they had not seen them. Filled with the most dismal forebodings he rode into the inner court-yard, and alighted from his horse with difficulty, so much was his frame enfeebled by undefined dread and fear. He ascended slowly to Liba's bower ; and, in another moment, she was fondly clasped in his arms. His dread was now dissipated ; his fear fled ; and his serenity of mind restored.

“Who is dead in the castle ?” enquired he of his dear Liba.

“Dead !” exclaimed she in surprise ; “no one.”

“Whose, then, was the coffin which entered the gate before me ?”

“Coffin !” said she, smiling ; “coffin !—you have mistaken the bridal-bed, which has just been brought in, for a coffin—ha ! ha ! ha !”

She laughed aloud.

“See here,” she continued, opening a door, “here is what you saw brought in as you entered the castle.”

The bridal-bed was there sure enough ; but Guntram was not to be undeceived. He only shook his head ; and sought to repress his emotions. Before he parted with Liba, at his earnest entreaty a near day was fixed for their union. She was happy in her innocence ;—how was he ? We shall shortly see.

Every hour which brought the day of their nuptials nearer decreased Guntram's sorrow, cleared up the clouds which hung

on his spirits, and made him altogether less unhappy. But nothing could make him gay again : for him there seemed no joy in this world any longer. The appointed day at length arrived ; and the bridal party proceeded to the chapel of the castle to assist in the celebration of the marriage. Their course lay across the principal court, and thence through a long, dim, vaulted gallery. As Guntram entered this passage, accompanied by the blooming maiden about to become his bride, he was aware of a veiled female form, led on by a tall knight accoutred in coal-black armour, preceding them. His soul sunk within him at the sight ; for again a presentiment of evil passed over him like a thunder-cloud. He remembered the coffin which he had seen some days before ;—the story which the peasant had told him ;—and the adventure he had met with in the fearful old castle of Waldburg : and he had not the heart to ask the black knight or the veiled lady who they were, or what was their business. Of this, however, he felt quite sure—they were not among the guests whom he had bidden to the banquet ; nor had he ever seen them before that he possessed a consciousness of. The black knight and the veiled lady entered the chapel : Guntram and Liba did the same : the bridal party followed. The ceremony proceeded ; the responses were made ; the marriage drew to a conclusion. Guntram reached forth his hand to his bride, to take her's "for life and for death," at the bidding of the priest ; and he clasped—what felt to him like the hand of a corpse,—chill, cold, and damp, as with the dews of death. He looked—between him and his Liba stood the maiden of Waldburg, with the sad, wanton eyes, and the long yellow hair. It was her hand that held his within its icy grasp. Uttering a cry of horror, Guntram fell senseless to the earth ; and in that state he was removed from the chapel to a chamber in the castle. Reason and recollection were long before they returned to him : when they did, however, he at once made preparations for a future state. A priest was sent for ; and he confessed, and received the holy communion from the father. Liba was then summoned to his bedside—now his death-bed ;—and there, without concealment or disguise, he told her all that had occurred to him in the chambers of Waldburg, and in the chapel of her own castle. Of the latter she was

ignorant until that moment ; for the veiled lady and the black knight were invisible to all present save the hapless Guntram.

“Be thou my guardian angel,” concluded he passionately, “in this my last hour of tribulation and sorrow ; and banish, by thy pure presence and thy fervent prayers, the fearful form that still haunts my dying moments.”

Liba wept bitterly, and offered up the orisons of an untainted heart for the peace of her lover’s departing spirit. As she proceeded to pour forth her soul to heaven in his behalf, he gradually acquired temporary strength of mind and body, and his soul began again to know that serenity which it had been so long a stranger to.

“Liba, my dear Liba,” said he, “I feel that, until thou art mine, until the vow which I plighted to thee is fulfilled, I can neither live nor die. Wilt thou be my bride ?—the bride of a dying man ?”

The maiden answered not, but went forth from the chamber. In a few moments she returned with the priest, who had previously left her lover.

“In life or in death I am thine,” was all she could say for sobbing and grief.

The ceremony was celebrated in full. Scarce had the last response been uttered by the departing knight, when the sleep of death fell on his heavy eyelids ;—the shadows of the grave then closed over him for ever. One sign only he made :—he stretched out his stiffening hand to his beloved Liba. She clasped it, kissed it, and sunk on his bosom. A moment more, and his soul had fled to that place “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”

Liba sorrowed but a short time in her widow’s weeds : for a few weeks only had elapsed when she followed her departed husband. One grave holds them both.

RHEINSTEIN.

Rheinstein castle is now one of the most interesting remnants of the past on the Rhine ; inasmuch as one of the royal princes of Prussia has had it rebuilt on the original plan, as far as

possible ; and fitted up for a summer residence altogether in the fashion of six centuries since. Very little is known of its early history ; and that little chiefly relates to the predatory exploits of its possessors in the middle ages. It is said to have shared the same fate as the contiguous strongholds of rapine, at the hands of the Rhenish confederation, in the middle of the thirteenth century ; and to have remained a ruin from that time until very recently. The following is one of the traditions connected with its earlier period of power and pride.

THE BARRED BRIDAL

Gerda, the only daughter of the aged lord of Rheinstein, was the fairest maiden on the shores of the Rhine, from Constance

to the sea ; and Sir Kuno von Reichenstein, who dwelt in the neighbouring castle of that name, was one of the bravest and most accomplished youths of the period to which this tale refers—the beginning of the twelfth century. They were much together, her father holding him in the highest estimation ; and his society gave the maid great pleasure, for he could tell of the Minnesangers,* and even, on occasions, could compose a song himself. Was it to be wondered at, then, that he should be in love with her beauty and her virtue ; or that she should not be insensible to his merits ;—he whom all concurred in eulogizing for valour and conduct, in war and in peace ?

It was on a sunny day, as Sir Kuno rode up to the castle gates of Rheinstein, that he was informed by the officious menials, with whom, from his kindness and liberality, he was an especial favourite, that the old knight had gone forth for some days, and that his lovely daughter was alone in her garden bower. His heart leaped within him at this intelligence ; he was glad, he knew not why ;—he was agitated with fear and dread, he knew not wherefore : but those who know the influence of love, know also the cause of these emotions. He had thought of the fair Gerda until she even became a portion of his mental being—he had dreamed of her, until the light of her loveliness had made a paradise of his chamber, and sleep Elysium : she was all in all to him—his life, his soul ; but yet he had never told his tale, or breathed in her tender ear the impassioned sighs of a lover. Could he then be otherwise than agitated with such an opportunity at his hand, and the irresistible impulse of love urging him onward to the feet of his idol ? He sought her in the garden ; and he found her musing, like the benevolent genius of that beautiful spot, in a little bower of woodbine, intertwined with roses and other bright and odorous plants and flowers. He sat beside her : she too seemed agitated. He arose : she bade him stay.

“ I pray you, Sir Kuno,” spake she, in accents as gentle as the breath of the zephyr upon the cords of an Æolian harp, “ I pray you to accept my best thanks for the noble Limousin barb that you have bestowed on me. My dear, kind father, has added another for my favourite maiden ; and thus made me the happiest of creatures.

* The German troubadours.

The sigh which succeeded, however, did not confirm this assertion. Sir Kuno noticed it;—she saw that he had observed her;—she became more and more embarrassed. Blush followed blush, until her lovely face and neck became suffused with the *lumen purpurea juvena*—the purple light of youth. Her soft, speaking eyes were fixed on the green sward of the garden; and the youth was soon at her feet, covering her unresisting hand with the burning pledges of first, and passionate love. It was all over with them: that brief moment decided their fate: he had declared his love, and she had listened approvingly to the declaration. Tears of joy and happiness coursed each other down her cheeks like May-dew on roses;—her bosom heaved like the face of ocean when the sun smiles on it.

“Will you be mine, my beloved Gerda?” was all the enraptured youth could utter.

“Yes,” she whispered, “thine for ever.” But that whisper had more music to his ear than all the harps of heaven.

They paced the garden in “converse sweet” until nightfall; and it was settled, ere they parted, that the young knight should apply to her father in due form for her hand.

“He will not,” she said, “gainsay you; for never heard I my dear sire speak better of man than he does of thee. Among all his friends, you are the favourite. Now, farewell. Remember me.”

“Ere thy remembrance dulls in my mind, life shall be extinct,” exclaimed the passionate youth. “Farewell.”

They parted as lovers should do: it need not be said how, for every one knows it. She retired to her chamber to think of her wooer; and he spurred his willing steed homewards, lost in a transport of intoxicating delight. Neither slept much that night; but their waking was far more pleasant than sleep. Oh that the Elysium of youth, and love, and hope, could always continue!

Pursuant to the prescriptive usage of the class of nobles in Germany at this period, the nearest relative of a suitor, or, failing that, the dearest friend, was customarily despatched as a mediator to those who stood in the same relation to the fair object of the suit, to pray for her hand, and make all necessary arrangements for the nuptials. Accordingly, Sir Kuno sought out his uncle, the rich old Baron Kurt, to perform that office for him.

Kurt was his next of kin, the brother of his father ; and he was the heir of all the extensive possessions enjoyed by the old man. But nature had cast the mind of the uncle and nephew in different moulds ; there was not a particle of identity between them. Kurt was as vicious as the young Kuno was virtuous ; the one was as malignant as the other was generous and forgiving ; in short, the uncle hated the nephew with an intensity felt only by the very bad. He hated him, because the stainless life he led was a reproach on the profligacy of his own ; he hated him, because his tastes were all of a contrary character from those low and degraded ones indulged in by himself ; and he hated him, more than all, for some unwarrantable primary cause, by reason that he was the sole heir to his property. It need scarcely be said, that the unsuspecting youth was quite unconscious of all this ; or otherwise he would have searched the world over sooner than make such an unnatural monster his emissary in a matter of this transcendantly delicate nature. But the wicked old man had cunning enough to conceal the true state of his heart from his nephew ; and the guilelessness of the youth assisted the delusion.

Kurt at once undertook the task of waiting on the Lord of Rheinstein, and asking the hand of his fair daughter for his nephew. He undertook it, because he had an indefinite presentiment that it would afford him an opportunity of doing the young knight an ill-turn in some manner or other ; and because he had had an old feud with the father of the intended bride, which, as it was anything but of fortunate result for himself, he was much pleased with the means thus given him of appeasing. In due time he visited Rheinstein, and was received with all the stately ceremony of the time. His errand was soon told ; and the beautiful Gerda then introduced to him : but no sooner had the hoary wretch cast his eyes on her, than he felt in his evil breast the glow of an all-consuming desire. He was not a moment in taking his resolution. That night he proposed for her himself ; waiving all the wonted formalities.

“ I have,” said he to her sire, to whom, be it remembered, the proposition was made alone ; “ I have the largest possessions of any noble in the land. No man of my rank, far and wide, can count so many castles, courts, forests, fields, herds, and vassals, as I ; and I have, besides, a large sum in gold—an untold trea-

sure. All these I offer to your daughter. Say, shall she be mine? It is true, my nephew loves her; but what of that? He hath nought to offer her but poverty;—his castle is all that he can command in the world. Choose between us—mediocrity on the one hand, and unbounded riches and power on the other. I wait your decision.”

Ambition, which had been the curse of the lords of Rheinstein from time immemorial, and avarice, which was equally fatal to them otherwise, did not cause long hesitation on the part of the fair victim’s father. He paused a moment only; then striking the open palm of Kurt’s hand, he exclaimed:

“You say right. She is thine. Such an alliance is worth everything to me. My daughter knows no will but mine. You shall have her consent to-morrow.”

With these words they parted; the one, to triumph in his successful scheme of villany; the other, to prepare the lovely Gerda for her fate.

Up to this point of time, the fair maiden had concealed her love from all save its object; but she did so only because it seemed sweeter to indulge in secret her anticipation of future happiness with her beloved. Any opposition on the part of her sire never entered into her mind for a single moment. What, then, was her horror, when he sought her bower, and bade her prepare for the bridal with Kurt! She hesitated—he grew impatient for her answer;—she was mute—he stormed like a wild animal. She flung herself at his feet at last, and confessed her love for the noble Kuno. His rage knew no bounds. She told him all—how she had long loved the youth, and how her love was returned—how she had no higher wish on earth than to be his wife—how his wishes and hers were similar—how, in short, she had, only a few days before, received his troth—and how she had then plighted her to him for ever.

“My father,” she exclaimed, as she embraced his knees, and bathed his feet with tears; “my father, urge me not to gainsay my honourable duty. I value not the possessions of him whom you would make my husband. Better bread and salt with the noble Kuno, than an imperial throne with that bad old man his uncle, whom I have always learned from you to fear and to distrust.”

"I give you until to-morrow," cried the incensed lord of Rheinstein. "Make up your mind by that time. Consent, and you are still my dearest child—the hope of my old age—the beloved of my heart—the prop of my infirmities; refuse, and I curse you with a father's curse. You shall be an outcast for ever from my home and heart; and you shall take the veil within three months, in the most rigid nunnery in Germany."

In vain did the despairing maiden adjure him, by everything high and holy, by every recollection tender and dear to his heart, to forego his resolution;—he was inflexible. Nay, even the name of her departed mother, whom he had once loved so fondly, now failed in its wonted effect upon his excited passions.

He went forth from her chamber; and the only words he would utter were,

"To-morrow—to-morrow—to-morrow!"

It was a fearful trial for one so young and inexperienced as the lovely Gerda; but, as Sterne beautifully observes, "the Lord tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." She left her chamber and descended to the garden. It was the evening hour: the setting sun flung a mass of brilliant light upon the silent river, making it look like a running stream of molten gold; the sky in the west was of the richest vermilion, bordered with azure of every tint. It was a glorious scene to see; yet Gerda's heart rejoiced not at it. The birds carolled in the boughs, their hymn of thanksgiving to the great Creator; but their praiseful song fell unheeded on her ear. She saw and heard nothing;—the tumult of her soul absorbed her every sense;—her all was at stake. She entered the woodbine bower, the place where she had plighted her affection to the youth; and there her heart seemed strengthened. She prayed to God for aid in the perilous pass to which she was compelled; and she rose from her knees resolved, come what might, to keep her plight with Kuno. At peace with herself, she returned to her chamber; and, until the next morning, forgot herself in a sweet sleep, such as innocence and virtue alone may enjoy.

At breakfast she encountered her sire. His brow was clouded with angry passions; and his aspect seemed to her like that of the sky before a thunder-storm. He asked her what she had resolved upon; and she answered, fidelity to her lover. He

stamped, and raged, and stormed, and swore ; but a consciousness of rectitude upheld the fair girl ; and though she trembled at his mood, it was not of sufficient power to alter her determination.

“ Go to your chamber,” said the angry man, when his passion gave him time to think ; “ go to your chamber at once. You shall not stir from within its four walls until you become the bride of the Baron Kurt —— ”

“ Never ! ” exclaimed the excited maid ; “ Never, my father ! never ! ”

“ —— And that shall be within eight-and-forty hours,” he continued, “ if I be a living man.”

“ Never ! never ! ” was all the answer she made him ; “ Never, my father ! never ! ”

In accordance with his promise, Rheinstein despatched a messenger to Kurt, informing him that maiden-modesty opposed a bar to such a speedy union as he sought ; but that within two days from thence his daughter would be ready to become a bride. Kurt was a little annoyed at this delay ; but as there was no remedy for it at hand, he forebore to make any observation.

“ All is right now ! ” he exclaimed ; “ she is mine past the power of man.”

At this moment, Kuno, brimful of expectation, entered the apartment.

“ My dear uncle,” he cried, “ tell me, What says he ? — what says the father of my beloved Gerda ? ”

Kurt shrugged his shoulders and was silent.

“ Speak, I adjure you, by all that is sacred ! ” cried the impetuous youth.

“ Her father,” replied the treacherous old man, “ says nay to your proposal. He says that you are too poor for the daughter of such a powerful noble as he is : he says, in short, that you shall not have her. So, my dear nephew, bear it like a man. Make up your mind to forget her. I did all I could in the matter.”

Heart-sore and sorrowful the young knight departed. His only hope now was in his beloved Gerda : he could not for a moment doubt her truth ; and he felt some consolation for his affliction, in the thought of her fidelity. In the meanwhile the maiden was a prey to the most heart-consuming grief : she slept

not, she spoke not, she ate not : but she, too, had her consolation in this extremity of distress, for she felt as conscious of her lover's faith, as he did of her high-mindedness and integrity. The great difficulty, however, was in communicating to him her condition : her father having set a strict watch on the walls, and forbade all his retainers, under pain of death, to admit the young knight of Reichenstein within them. It was, however, surmounted by the zeal of her favourite damsel, and the fearlessness of a faithful domestic, both attached to their mistress through affection, and to Sir Kuno through his kindness and generosity. The young knight was soon informed of all. Rewarding the messenger beyond his expectations, he despatched him back to his ladye-love with a message, bidding her hold herself in readiness, for that on the same night he should free her from her thralldom, and make her his wife. Gerda received the message ; and, after a short but severe struggle between filial duty and plighted faith, she concluded to accede to the proposition.

Night came ; and so did Sir Kuno with his vassals. Gerda was ready with her damsel, and the domestic who had been her messenger. All was prepared for flight. But the cunning Kurt had anticipated some such movement on their parts ; and he had recommended a further reinforcement of the watch on the castle walls to his intended father-in-law : a recommendation which was promptly complied with. Sir Kuno and his vassals approached the walls under cover of the darkness ; but vain was their every attempt to enter ; for door and drawbridge were all fast ; and each mode of ingress was effectually barred to them. Not so, however, with the means of egress : for, while they stood despairing, all of a sudden the drawbridge fell, the castle gates were flung open, and a host of armed men, twice their number, rushed forth and attacked them. A fierce fight ensued ; but it ended in the discomfiture of Kuno's followers. The young knight himself only escaped by hewing his way through the crowd of eager men-at-arms, who sought out and surrounded him by the special direction of their lord and master the Baron of Rheinstein. Gerda was now in despair. She deemed that all was lost ; and she would not be comforted until she had learned of her lover's safety. In vain did her sire storm and rave at her ; his power over her was now at an end.

"To-morrow, ungrateful girl!" he cried, "to-morrow you shall be the bride of the Baron Kurt."

"You may drag me to the church—you may slay me on the horns of the altar, if you will," replied she, "but his bride I'll be—never!"

The old man left the chamber in a fit of rage which knew no bounds.

"Yes, Rosweietha," she exclaimed, flinging herself in the arms of her faithful damsel, "they shall kill me first. Never shall I be the bride of such a bad man—never!"

That night was spent in preparation for the nuptials by all within the castle, save Gerda and her maiden, and the faithful domestic who had already so well served her: she spent it in an agony of tears—they in pitiful sympathy with her sorrow.

The morning rose bright and beautiful, as the summer morn ever does, on the lovely land which is watered by the noble Rhine; and it was ushered in with the sound of pipe and tabor, harp and psaltery, by the castle minstrels. The tones of the tender flute, commingled with the shrilly notes of the bugle, and the full deep volume of the hunting horn, ascended up from the valleys in most melodious combination: they came from the vassals and retainers of the house of Rheinstein, who had all been summoned to the nuptial ceremony, as beseemed the custom of the family from time immemorial. The gates were thrown open; the bridal procession issued forth. There was the lovely victim on the splendid Limousin steed presented to her by her lover; on one side rode her stern sire, on the other her hoary bridegroom, in expectance. Behind them,—a countless crowd,—came the vassals and retainers of Rheinstein, ranked in their several degrees. The regular train was brought up by the domestic servants of the castle. On their heels followed a host of serfs, men, women, and children, all shouting in joyful anticipation of the bridal guerdon. It was a proud and a pompous exhibition: for all that wealth and power could do to make it so, was lavished on it with most unsparing hand. In this order they drew near to the chapel of St. Clement, where the marriage ceremonies of the Rheinstein family had been performed for unremembered generations. Merrily went the sweet chimes of the church tower: but, oh! how heavily they fell upon the ear of the forlorn Gerda.

Cheerily shouted the crowd, until Echo answered again ; but, oh ! how sad was the sound to her aching heart. Every step seemed to bring her but the nearer to her fate : yet the force of her resolution still sustained her. It was well that it was so ; otherwise she could not have made a part in that proud pageant.

From the summit of the highest tower of his castle of Reichenstein, Sir Kuno looked down on the scene below him. He saw the nuptial train ;—he heard the shouts of jubilee ;—and he beheld his own, his beloved Gerda, approach the church of St. Clement. His heart sunk within him ; black despair hovered over him. He thought to fling himself from the tower ; but the hand of Providence held him back.

“Can it be ?” he soliloquized ; “and is there no more faith in her than this ? God of heaven, my Gerda untrue ! No, it is impossible. And yet there she is : she approaches the church door—her next step will be to the altar. No, I cannot believe my eyes. But, should it be so, farewell for ever to happiness. The remainder of my life shall be spent in the solitude of the desert woods, where society I may have none but the wild beasts of the forest. Oh, how much more faithful than man ! They are now at the church door. The train halts—God——”

He turned his head away for a moment, that he might not see her enter the sacred edifice.

The procession had halted at the portal to the church ; and all had alighted, preparatory to entering it. Gerda alone remained seated on her steed, until the foot-train was fully formed. When all was ready, the hoary bridegroom approached, while her father held the reins, and prayed her to accept his assistance to alight. At this moment a swarm of gad-flies rested on the flanks of the barb ; and the noble animal, stung to madness plunged and reared, and ultimately broke free from all control. He overturned the father of the bride, and trampled down the wicked old Kurt : every one that tried to catch him shared a similar fate. All fled before him ; and he sped with the rapidity of the wind along the shore of the river.

“To horse ! to horse !” cried Rheinstein.

“To horse ! to horse !” echoed Kurt.

The retainers were soon mounted, and in hot pursuit of the flying animal and his undaunted rider : but Kurt outstripped them all.

"Tight rein ! pull tight !" he cried, in breathless haste, to the fair fugitive. "Sweet bride, pull tight—then he'll stop."

But Gerda not only gave the rein more freely to the impetuous animal ; but actually sought to quicken his speed by the application of hand and voice.

"Stay ! stay !" shouted Kurt.

She flung back her white veil, which floated in the wind like a pennon, and gave him a look of triumph and contempt.

"Hurrah ! hurrah !" burst forth from a hundred voices, which crowded the walls of Reichenstein, as the noble animal, even in the madness of the moment, thundered along the forgotten and familiar road to the castle where he was reared.

"Throw wide the gates ! Down with the drawbridge ! Keep the portcullis on the drop !" shouted Kuno, from the turret. "The steed comes hither. Bravo ! my gallant barb !"

"Stay ! stay !" panted Kurt, who now neared the fugitive. "Stay ! stay ! Curses on you, villain ! brute !"

He gained on her—his hand was on the reins of her steed ;—but his horse stumbled and fell—he was flung over his head on a piece of rock. There he lay senseless. Another moment, and the tramp of the Limousin made the drawbridge thunder ; another, and the rescued maiden was enfolded in the embraces of her lover. The drawbridge was then raised—the portcullis was let down—and every gate and portal barred : besides this, the castle-walls were crowded with zealous retainers exulting in victory, armed to the teeth, and ready to dare every thing for their beloved lord and his rescued bride.

Little more remains to be said. The old Knight of Reichenstein now rode up with the principal part of his followers. He was just in time to receive the last breath of Kurt, who died in a state of mind bordering on madness. Shrift had he none ; and few prayed for his soul. The finger of Providence was perceptible in his unhappy end. Thus ever perish traitors. It required little time, and less persuasion, to induce the incensed sire to forgive his daughter and her lover, so miraculously, as it were, united, notwithstanding all his efforts to the contrary ; more especially, as all the followers of the deceased Kurt now unanimously hailed Sir Kuno as their lord, with loud and joyous acclamations. Reichenstein next rode up to the drawbridge,

attended by two retainers, and demanded a parley. It was granted; he was admitted. Within five short minutes the lovely Gerda and her noble knight were at his feet; and he was pouring out blessings on them and their remotest posterity. Poor human nature! how consistent thou art on most occasions!

It is to be presumed—for it is not told in chronicle or tradition—that the newly united couple lived happily, and died so.

THE MOUSE TOWER.

The next place of note on the Rhine is the famous Mouse Tower, the legend of which has been made so extensively known in England by the admirable ballad of Southey. There are many theories to account for the name which the ruin bears. These are a few of them :—

“A musket-shot below the city of Bingen,” says Merian,* “stands, in the middle of the Rhine, the Mouse Tower. It stands on a rock in the river, like a little castle; and is built of massive stones, so that no wave may cover it, nor any flood wash it away; how great so ever the fulness of the current, or the force thereof. When the Rhine is low,” he proceeds, “and the channel is bare, ruins are discoverable branching off from the

* *Topographiæ Archiep. Mogunt. Trevir. Colon. fol. 1646, p. 2 et supra.*

basis of the tower, as though the original building to which it pertained were once larger; and in the tower itself, engraven on the greater stones which compose it, are still to be seen small crosses inscribed in circles, like, as it were, to wheels with spokes: also a deep hole, like that in the neighbouring toll-house." Trithemius* tells us that, a thousand years ago, this edifice was standing; and that it had been erected as a watch-tower, ages anterior to that era. Yet some ancient Latin verses ascribed to Willigis, archbishop of Mainz, would seem to sanction its foundation by him;† and Serarius, a most accurate old writer, states that the name by which it is known to posterity, was derived from that prelate. The latter deduces it very naively thus:—"When a person is watching any thing, he is like a cat looking after a mouse; this tower was built as a watch-tower, and therefore it is called the Mouse Tower, because the coming barques, whether they be foes or strangers, are like unto mice." Serarius discountenances the legend of Bishop Hatto, and Trithemius positively denies it; yet such is the love of the marvellous inherent in human nature, that the story is not alone current, but has absolutely found thousands and tens of thousands of believers.

Little further can be said of the Mouse Tower, except that it is generally supposed to derive its singular appellative from the old French word *Mousserie* (musquetry), in consequence of its occupation as a watch-tower; and that it has been a subject of wonder and deep interest to all tourists on the Rhine, from time immemorial.

Every body knows, however, that its erection as a place of refuge from the mice who persecuted him, is attributed to Hatto,

* Chronic. Hirsch. A. D. 967.

† The verses referred to run thus; they are part of a longer piece *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*:—

" Pontem construxit apud Aschaffburg, benè duxit
 Ad pontem per Nabe: miles transit quoque verna,
 Et benè necesse prope Bing Mäusen dedit esse."

The "wheels with spokes cut into the greater stones," alluded to by Merian, would seem to countenance this claim; but that Trithemius, who lived before him, is reckoned an undoubted authority for the events of his time. Perhaps Willigis re-edified the structure; and thence, by a natural vanity, laid claim to its foundation.

archbishop of Mainz ; and that it is from the fabulous circumstance of his destruction by these little animals, that the structure takes its present name. The ballad of Dr. Southey, alluded to, gives at once the most vivid and most popular version of this strange legend extant ; and it is, therefore, offered here in preference to any other which could be adopted in these pages.

THE TRADITION OF BISHOP HATTO.

The summer and autumn had been so wet,
That in winter the corn was growing yet ;
'Twas a piteous sight to see all around
The grain lie rotting on the ground.

Every day the starving poor
Crowded around Bishop Hatto's door,
For he had a plentiful last-year's store ;
And all the neighbourhood could tell
His granaries were furnished well.

At last, Bishop Hatto appointed a day
To quiet the poor without delay ;
He bade them to his great barn repair,
And they should have food for the winter there.

Rejoiced at such tidings good to hear,
The poor folk flocked from far and near ;
The great barn was full as it could hold
Of women and children, and young and old.

Then when he saw it could hold no more,
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door ;
And while for mercy on Christ they call,
He set fire to the barn and burnt them all.

" I' faith, 'tis an excellent bonfire !" quoth he,
" And the country is greatly obliged to me,
For ridding it, in these times forlorn,
Of rats that only consume the corn."

So then to his palace returned he,
And he sat down to supper merrily,
And he slept that night like an innocent man,
But Bishop Hatto never slept again.

In the morning, as he entered the hall
Where his picture hung against the wall,
A sweat like death all over him came,
For the rats had eaten it out of its frame.

As he look'd, there came a man from his farm,
He had a countenance white with alarm ;
“ My lord, I open'd your granaries this morn,
And the rats had eaten all your corn.”

Another came running presently,
And he was pale as pale could be ;
“ Fly ! my lord bishop, fly !” quoth he,
“ Ten thousand rats are coming this way ;
The Lord forgive you for yesterday !”

“ I'll go to my tower on the Rhine,” replied he,
“ 'Tis the safest place in Germany ;
The walls are high, and the shores are steep,
And the stream is strong, and the water deep.”

Bishop Hatto fearfully hastened away,
And he cross'd the Rhine without delay,
And he reach'd his tower, and barr'd with care
All the windows, doors, and loopholes there.

He laid him down, and closed his eyes ;
But soon a scream made him arise ;
He started, and saw two eyes of flame
On his pillow, from whence the screaming came.

He listen'd and look'd ;—it was only the cat ;
But the bishop he grew more fearful for that,
For she sat screaming, mad with fear
At the army of rats that were drawing near.

For they have swam over the river so deep,
 And they have climb'd the shores so steep,
 And now by thousands up they crawl
 To the holes and windows in the wall.

Down on his knees the bishop fell,
 And faster and faster his beads did he tell,
 As louder and louder drawing near
 The saw of their teeth without he could hear.

And in at the windows, and in at the door,
 And through the walls by thousands they pour,
 And down through the ceiling, and up through the floor,
 From the right and the left, from behind and before,
 From within and without, from above and below,
 And all at once to the bishop they go.

They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
 And now they pick the bishop's bones ;
 They gnawed the flesh from every limb,
 For they were sent to do judgment on him.

It is but justice, however, to add, that, according to the testimony of historians the most worthy of credit, Hatto was rather a saviour of his country than an oppressor of its people and a ruthless tyrant, as this and the succeeding legend would make him appear in the eyes of posterity ; and that it is more than probable his popularity with the common-folk, arising from the justice which he strictly administered to them, the restraints which he placed on their exacting neighbours, the robber-knights, and the general peace which he established in his diocess, was the cause of those unjust aspersions on his memory, originated, no doubt, and circulated by his enemies with all the energy and all the intensity of hate, known only to a state of semi-barbarism.

A Rhenish antiquarian* has decided against the remote antiquity usually assigned to this remarkable structure, and

* Bodmer, " Rheingauische Alterthümer," band i. s. 148.

attempted, but without much success, to fix the date of its erection in the thirteenth century.

The Mouse Tower is stated, in a more recent tradition, to have been the scene of a most valiant defence at the period of the "thirty years' war." Seven German soldiers repulsed three companies of Swedes who attempted to carry the place, then occupied as a military position by these brave men. When they were all shot down except one, the Swedish captain sympathising with his valour, offered him his life. But this heroic soldier, disdaining to owe existence to his enemy, or, perhaps, unwilling to survive his friends and fellow-soldiers, refused the proffered boon, and plunged into the foaming flood, where he was lost for ever.

EHRENFELS.

On the right bank of the Rhine, exactly opposite the Mouse Tower, and commanding the mouth of the Nahe, stands Ehrenfels, contemporary, it is said, with this structure.

HATTO'S TREASON.

There are many terrible tales told of Hatto, archbishop of Mainz—his treachery and his ruthlessness; but few of them may be more terrible than these. All they want to make them really so is—truth.

In the year 905, when Ludwig the Child, the last of the Carolingian race, reigned over Germany, Adalbert, a Franco-nian noble of high rank and independent power seized Conrad, the emperor's brother, and shut him up in the castle of Ehrenfels. Ludwig laid siege to the castle; but he found it impregnable by his slender force; and was well-nigh abandoning the enterprise altogether, but for Hatto, who was then his chief private councillor of state.

"My life on it," said the wicked ecclesiastic, "I'll outwit this wild Adalbert."

The king wished to know how; and the archbishop informed him. The plan was then agreed on; for Ludwig had as little honour or honesty as he had ability for governing; and every body knows, that of this he had none.

Hatto set forth alone from the court, and took his way to the lately beleaguered castle. His sacred character obtained him ready admission ; and Adalbert received him as the messenger of peace, which he professed to be.

"My son," said he to the count, "our sire, the emperor, is sorrowed, but not angry, at thy faults. He would fain have an excuse for forgiving thee ;—the remembrance of old friendship is strong in his heart."

With these and other crafty speeches he so won on Adalbert, that the knight promised to make personal submission, provided that the archbishop would ensure him safe coming and safe going.

"As sure as God liveth," outspake Hatto, kneeling, as he said it, before the crucifix which stood over the altar of the oratory in which they held converse ;—"as sure as God liveth, I shall myself bring thee safe back to this castle ; and if I break my vow, may God do so unto me, and more than befalls you."

Adalbert was satisfied. In an hour they were on their road to Mainz together, where the king then held his court.

"Ho, ho !" said the prelate, laughing loudly, when they had got about a mile or two on their road, "ho, ho ! what a hospitable man you are, to let your guest leave home without breakfast. The morning air has whetted my appetite—hast any cheer in thy train ?"

"What a churl I must seem to thee, most holy father," replied the count ; "in the ardour of my loyalty, I forgot the first duty of a host."

"Well, well," said Hatto, "it matters not overmuch for the present ; but as we are so close at hand, would it not be better that we should return to the castle and refresh ourselves. The ride to Mainz is a long one for me."

"Most willingly," answered the count.

Their horses' heads were speedily turned ; and in a few moments more they were within the walls whence they had set out.

"Now," said Hatto, when they had concluded their morning meal, "let us away."

"But first a stirrup-cup," interposed the hospitable count.

A beaker of foaming Johannisberger was brought by the countess herself, and handed to the archbishop.

"I drink to your health," said Hatto; "may you be rewarded as I wish!"

He emptied the goblet.

They then set out on their journey, and towards night-fall reached Mainz.

That night was the noble Adalbert seized by the servants of the emperor, and dragged, pinioned, to his presence. Hatto stood beside the incensed monarch. Adalbert stood before them.

"Traitor!" cried Ludwig, "prepare to die. This hour is thy last!"

"You pledged your troth for my personal safety," said Adalbert, addressing himself to Hatto.

"And I most religiously kept it," replied the unmoved ecclesiastic.

"How?" asked the count, with astonishment and contempt,—"call you this keeping it?"

He shook his fetters as he spake; but their clank fell unheeded on the ear of the treacherous archbishop.

"No!" resumed Hatto. "I promised to bring thee back to thy castle in safety on our first setting out: did I not do so? It was not my fault, but thy want of wit, if thou exactedst not a similar plight from me on our second setting forth."

As he said this, he laughed like the fiend which tradition has depicted him.

"Take him off to execution!" said the emperor.

"Amen!" responded Hatto.

That night the noble Adalbert was beheaded.

RUPERTSBERG.

Recrossing the Rhine, to the other side, on the left bank of the river Nahe, rises the hill called Rupertsberg, covered with the remains of a once famous convent, the abode, in former ages, of the prophetess Hildegard.

It is of the half-romantic, half-real, history of this extraordinary woman that this tradition treats ; as, unconnected with her life and legends, the structure in itself possesses no peculiar interest.

THE PROPHETESS HILDEGARD.

On the death of Rupert, duke of Bingen, and his ladye mother of whom more anon,* his dominions were divided among his relatives and friends ; the greatest portion of them, however, became annexed to the see of Mainz, for the uses of the church, and contributed greatly to the extension and aggrandisement of that principality. From a pious and noble couple, Hildebert von Bökelheim and his spouse Matilda, inheriting a part of the former territory of Duke Rupert, sprang the subject of this memoir, Hildegard. She was born in the castle of Spanheim on the Nahe, not far from Kreuznach, A.D. 1089. About the same time, the wife of the sovereign Count, Neginhard of Gräfenbach, in whose service the parents of Hildegard were, gave birth to a daughter, whom they named Hiltrudis. The two children contracted an intimacy with each other, which ripened into friendship as they advanced in years. They were consigned to the maternal care of the count's sister, Guta, abbess of Disibodenberg, for their education : and so wrapt up did they become in a short time with the life of a nun—so inflamed were their young minds with the legends of their ancestor St. Rupert, and his pious mother Bertha,—that they vowed a mutual vow to devote themselves, ever after, even as they had done, to the service of God and the advancement of religion. They accordingly took the veil, without meeting any opposition from their respective parents, and became nuns in the convent of Disibodenberg. In process of time the abbess died ; and Hildegard was unanimously chosen in her stead. For twelve successive years did she govern this society with the highest reputation of sanctity ; at the end of that period, however, acting on the impulse of a vision, or a dream, she relinquished the dignity of abbess, for the purpose of founding another convent on the scene of her ancestor's glory. Hence the once celebrated nunnery of Rupertsberg, built in his honour, and named after his name.

* Vide Bingen. § " Rupert, duke of Bingen," p. 347.

On the completion of this structure (A.D. 1148), Hildegard, taking with her eighteen of the noblest nuns in Disibodenberg, entered on the duties of superior of St. Ruppertsberg; and from thenceforward her fame for piety was enhanced by the singularity and success of her several prophecies. She was a woman of an ardent spirit, an enthusiastic mind, and a pure, chaste heart; and the abuses of religion and power at that period so shocked her sensibilities, that against them were mainly levelled her formidable predictions. A fragment of one of her letters will best describe the extraordinary state of mind, of which she found an echo in the greater part of Europe in her day; and give some insight into the springs of action which, through her words and her writings, influenced a large portion of the Christian world at the period. "I know not," she writes to Wibert von Gemblach, an old friend,*—"I know not entirely that which I see, while I have earthly business to perform; for then my soul is nigh invisible to me; but I always perceive that there is much to be done by man before he can be saved. From the earliest days that my bones were knit, and my sinews were strung—yea, from that hour to this, now that I am full threescore and ten years old—my spirit has been ever stirred by those visions of the future. Even as it pleases the Omnipotent to will it, my soul is at one moment raised to the highest Heaven, and sent floating through the regions of ether: or at another, despatched to far-distant lands, to hold communion with stranger people. I then glance into myself, and there see portrayed, now on the clouds of Heaven, anon in the actions of foreign folk, all the accidents of the future. By day or by night it is the same;—in the midst of society, or in the solitude of my cell, the workings of the spirit are irrepressible." This may tend to illustrate the character of the woman and her prophecies; which, whatever source derived from—the fumes of a heated imagination, or the deliberate plans of imposture—had a most astonishing effect on the Christian people of Europe.

Whilst she governed the nunnery of St. Ruppertsberg, and its daily increasing community, Germany was a prey to the fierce civil strife, which arose between the Emperor Conrad the Third

* Vogt, "Rheinische Sagen und Geschichte."

and Henry the Proud, duke of Saxony and Bavaria, one of the principal feudatories of the empire, who had been dispossessed of his dominions and deposed from his dignities. Though not quite relevant here, it may not be altogether out of place briefly to allude to the origin of that quarrel. Henry the Proud was opposed to the election of Conrad; and Conrad, on attaining power, deprived him of the Duchy of Saxony, under the pretext that the German law allowed no individual to be seised of two principal feoffs of the empire; giving it to his friend and follower, Albert the Bear, landgrave of Thuringia. Henry, wroth at this proceeding of the emperor, rose in arms against him; on which Conrad deposed and dispossessed him of the Duchy of Bavaria also, conferring it on another of his friends, Leopold, markgraf of Austria. Henry was still possessed of the property derived from the Countess Matilda of Tuscany, in Italy; but these successive disgraces and deprivations broke his spirit and ended his life. He died within a year; and left the inheritance of vengeance to his celebrated son, Henry the Lion. On his death, his brother, Welf, or Guelph, laid claim to the Duchy of Bavaria, and a fierce contest ensued; but it terminated in his defeat. This was the beginning of that fearful strife which, under the name of the feud of the Guelfs and Ghibellines, for more than three centuries desolated the fairest portion of Europe, and deluged Italy with the best blood of her worthiest sons.* The names of Guelf and Ghibelline were derived, the first from the opponent of Conrad, Welf (Italian, Guelph); the second from the war-cry of the emperor's partizans, Waiblingen (Italian, Ghibelline), the name of a family estate of the noble house of Hohenstaufen, of which Conrad was the chief.

In the midst of this unholy strife the celebrated St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, set on foot the project of a third crusade; and then traversed central Europe to preach it to the people and princes of the respective countries. At that period the Rhine was the centre of civilization—the seat of the German empire—and the main highway of the known world. Thither the pious abbot first directed his steps; and there he preached with a success which exceeded his most sanguine expectations. Aware that he

* Hermann, "Allgemeine Geschichte," p. 225.

could effect little towards the accomplishment of his great object while discord reigned in the empire, he set about the task of reconciling the contending parties; but aware also that other influences besides his own were necessary, he determined on enlisting in his aid the piety of the Abbess Hildegard. To this end he paid her a visit at St. Rupertsberg; and the result was, a most awful prophecy in denunciation of those who should neglect the cry of God's people in Palestine, and permit the Holy Sepulchre to remain any longer in possession of the heathen. It must have been a singularly interesting interview—the first meeting between these two extraordinary beings; he exercising a power over the minds of mankind by the simple gift of eloquence, unheard of and unknown since the days of Peter the Hermit: she, a power equally great, through the influence of an ardent imagination, and an enthusiastic manner of communicating her fanciful impressions. The excellent historian of the Rhine* has preserved this prophecy entire; but it would be only a waste of space to quote it in a work of this nature. One remark, however, may be made on the subject: it is an impartial denunciation; for it not alone includes the clergy, together with the civilians, the emperor, the electors, and the nobles of the land; but it is even more severe upon their notorious vices than upon those equally notorious of the others. It should also, in strict justice, be added, that it vaguely foretells the dismemberment of the Germanic empire, and the downfall of the universal dominion of the papal supremacy.†

* Vogt, "Rheinische Sagen und Geschichten."

† The passages in which they chiefly occur are as follows. They were written in the 12th century, and offer rather an extraordinary coincidence:—

"In this time also will be the power, and dominion, and dignity, wherewith is ruled this empire, much diminished; and the empire itself brought to great decay and narrow compass: which will be the result of the guilt and neglect of its rulers."

* * * * *

"Many kings, and princes, and potentates, and people, will withdraw themselves from their allegiance to the empire; and each people—yea, each province—will choose its own lord and master, saying, 'What get we by the empire? We get more loss than profit—more disgrace than honour.'"

* * * * *

"Then also will decline the honour and greatness of the apostolic chair. Then will princes and people seek their faith in that quarter no more. Then

The success of St. Bernard in preaching this crusade is well known ; but it is not so generally known that Hildegard's prophecies greatly contributed to it. Of the result of the crusade itself it is not within the province of this sketch to speak ; but that it was as disastrous as those which preceded it, is a fact within the cognizance of every reader of history. In imitation of Moses on the mountain of Horeb, the abbess of Rupertsberg went to the top of the highest peak of the Taunus ;* and there, with outstretched arms, remained so long in prayer to God for the success of her pious friend's mission, that she fell senseless to the earth. She also abandoned the solitude of her cloister, it is said, and alone and a-foot, preached the crusade, not only in all the towns and cities on the Rhine ; but even crossed the Alps, and reached Rome itself, in the fervour of her zeal and enthusiasm.† But this is merely a rumour, not as sufficiently authenticated as the history of all the rest of her actions happens to be. However, it is pleasing to believe it, even if an error ; for what can be more beautiful to contemplate than such earnestness in behalf of the ignorant and the vicious—and such heroism and devotion on the part of a woman ; who, brought up from infancy in the peace of a convent, was as necessarily innocent of the world and its tortuous ways as a sinless child ? Her reward from St. Bernard consisted of advice, a knife, and a ring, with the legend, “ I suffer willingly,” engraven on it : the advice was, to place her nunnery under the rule of St. Benedict, and found a monastery of the same order contiguous to it : the meaning of the others may have been a mystery, obscured, or altogether forgotten, in the lapse of intervening ages.

Hildegard's fame and glory grew greater with her increasing years ; so much so, indeed, that additional thousands visited her humble cell annually until her death ; and her visions and prophecies became more and more celebrated in proportion to their mystic nature and their enlarged number. To the poor she

will the papal power be bounded and cramped. Then will other bishops and teachers of religion be set up in opposition to the pope : and the pope possess no longer any control, except over Rome and its immediate vicinity.”

* Known as the “ Brunhildstein.”

† Neumont. Rheinland's “ Sagen, Geschichten und Legenden.” Köln und Aachen, 1837.

administered consolation—to the rich and the great she gave good counsel; and the most powerful princes in Europe were among the countless crowd of her visitants. Besides these works of mercy and outpourings of the prophetic spirit, she also gave occasional license to the spirit of poetry, with the essence of which her nature was strongly impregnated; composing several church hymns, psalms, and other pieces of sacred song, some of which are still in existence. She died, in the fulness of years and honour, beloved and venerated by all her contemporaries, on the 17th September, 1179; and, after lying several days in state, an object of almost divine worship, to tens of thousands of spectators, who flocked from all parts of Germany merely to touch her corpse, she was buried in the chancel of the convent of Ruppertsberg.

This celebrated and extraordinary woman left behind her several devotional and theological works, her own compositions, which evince a degree of intellectual cultivation far in advance of the ordinary enlightenment of the age in which she lived; she also busied herself in physic, among many others, there being found in her remains a complete treatise on the healing art, consisting of several curious receipts, and many notions, quite as curious, of the human system. Her prophetic homilies are too numerous only to mention. Most of them were dedicated to the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, or Pope Eugene the Third, or various prelates and abbots of the period; and very many are still preserved in the nunnery of Eubingen, near Rudesheim, on the opposite shore of the Rhine.*

* An extract from one entitled "*Scivias*," or "*Scientiæ vias simplicis hominis*," may afford the best idea of the nature of her mind. The sources of her inspiration were, evidently, the Revelations of St. John:—

"In the sixty-first year of my age I heard a voice from Heaven, which spake unto me: 'Thou who, from thy earliest infancy, wert imbued with the Spirit of God, and the knowledge of the history of his works, rather than with the vain desires and ignorant learning of this world, listen to the words which thou shalt hear, and tell them to mankind.'"

Again:—

"I had begun to write—when, behold! I heard a voice from Heaven, and saw a man of such surpassing beauty and height, that his head touched the clouds, while his feet were on the earth; and his loveliness dazzled the eyes to look on."

And so on.

The convent and abbey of Ruppertsberg flourished, and put forth many branches from the parent stock, until the time of the Thirty Years' War, when it was burned by the Swedes, under Gustavus Adolphus (A.D. 1632). The mortal remains of Hildegard were then transferred to Eubingen, already mentioned; and her followers found protection there from the Archbishop of Mainz.

Ruppertsberg appears to have been, as it were, the prescriptive abode of prophets, or rather the prescriptive focus of prophecy or imposture, as the case may be considered; for we find that Bartholemew Holzhausen, the well-known interpreter of the future, there predicted the restoration of Charles the Second to the English throne, when that monarch was a fugitive in Bingen. That prediction was, however, accompanied by a caveat, which, if not an interpretation subsequent to the event, must be certainly looked on as an extraordinary coincidence, or wondrous knowledge of future events. After stating substantially the circumstance of the restoration of the royal exile, it adds, "*Cave ne Catholicam Romanam religionem restaures*;—But take heed you restore not the Roman Catholic religion."

A fountain is shewn in the ruins of the convent, which is said to have been one of the pious labours of Hildegard: miracle-mongers tell that it was excavated by her own hands.

BINGEN.

Bingen, situated at the mouth of the Nahe, where that river pours its tributary waters into the Rhine, lays a well-founded claim to a very high antiquity. The present town, however, does not stand on the site of the more ancient city, the origin of which is attributed to Drusus Germanicus; but on the opposite side of the Nahe, whither the population had transferred itself in the early part of the middle ages. In all literary remains of the classical period the place is termed *Bingium*. It is generally believed that the Roman hero, Drusus, first opened the passage through the ledge of rocks which runs across the Rhine, a little below the Mouse Tower, long known as the *Binger Loch*.

Bingen was the scene of a famous engagement fought by the Batavians, under their great leader, Claudius Civilis, against the Romans, then masters of the Rhine and a large part of Germany, in the reigns of Vespasian and the "beastly Vitellius" (A.D. 69-78). "During the civil wars which followed the death of Nero," says Gibbon,* "that artful and intrepid Batavian, whom his enemies condescended to compare with Hannibal and Sertorius,† formed a great design of freedom and ambition. Eight Batavian cohorts, renowned in the wars of Britain and Italy, repaired to his standard. He introduced an army of Germans into Gaul, prevailed on the powerful cities of Treves and Langres to embrace his cause, defeated the legions, destroyed their fortified camps, and employed against the Romans the military knowledge which he had acquired in their service."

Some centuries subsequently, that is to say, about the era of the Merovignian monarchs of Austrasia, Bingen became the abode of a duke, who, in process of time, assumed an independent sovereignty over the adjacent district. It is to this period that the subsequent legend bears reference; and the tale told in it relates to one—the last on record—of these princes.

RUPERT, DUKE OF BINGEN.

Altogether different in character and tenor from most of the tales hitherto narrated, is the story of Rupert, the last Duke of Bingen, which follows: it may, perhaps, serve as a relief to the wild severity of some, the touching tenderness of others, and the exaggerated extravagance of a few among the remainder.

Long after the expulsion of the Romans from Germany, Bingen or Klopp, which was one of the fifty castles built by Drusus on the Rhine to overawe the Alemanni, became the nucleus of the present town, and the seat of a duchy. It then lay on the left bank of the Nabe, as it now does on the right; and, in the time of Ludwig (or Louis) the mild, ‡ successor of Charlemagne, was the residence of a powerful chief, who governed all that rich tract of country lying between the Heimbach, Simmer, Selz, and

* Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, cap. ix.

† Tacitus, Hist. iv. 13. Like them, he had lost an eye.

‡ A. D. 814-840.

Ries, from the Rhine to Lorraine, under the title of Duke of Bingen. His name is not recorded in authentic history ; but that of his beautiful daughter, Bertha, is familiar to all Rhenish antiquarians. It is of her and of her son that this tale treats.

Among the many wooers of Bertha was one, a neighbouring prince named Roland, or, according to the prophetess Hildegard, Robolaus, probably of Saxon descent ; a wild, rugged, uncultivated man, but withal valiant, powerful, and frequently victorious in battle. He was a heathen—a worshipper of Odin : but the duke and his daughter were Christians. Still, however, such was his valour, that when he bade for the hand of the fair Bertha, her father did not refuse him, because he was an admirer of heroic deeds ; he also hoped that the mild character of the young bride would have the effect of mollifying his rugged heart, and, mayhap, of making him a convert to Christianity. They were accordingly married ; Bertha having no will but that of her father ; and her father being anxious to have such a powerful ally in his son-in-law. But all the hopes that had been founded on her influence proved to be futile : for, the first fervour of passion past, the rugged Roland insensibly relapsed into his former course of life. No longer did he desire to dwell in the sight of his beautiful young bride : arms and strife now occupied the most of his time ;—the rest was spent in the society of stranger women of loose character. Bertha sought to win back his estranged heart by every means which a gentle woman should employ ; but all in vain : her efforts were useless—her entreaties were met by reproach and reviling—her caresses by coldness or cruelty—and her love was requited with hatred. Unable any longer to endure this miserable change, she retired from his presence to one of his castles, Laubenheim, on the Nahe, not far distant from Stromberg ; and there, in deep solitude, deplored her luckless destiny—her only confidant, Heaven—her only consolation, tears and mourning. In the bitterness of her heart would she exclaim, on awaking with the sun from her troubled dream of the night, and on laying down her aching head to sleep, not repose, when the shadows of night were thick on the earth ; “ Oh, God ! shall I never be freed from the power of this ruthless tyrant ? ” and then would she repent of her natural impatience, and pray forgiveness for her repining. Thus time traversed slowly,

to her thought, until the period of her *accouchement* arrived. She had vowed a vow to Heaven, that the infant which she bore should be devoted to the service of God; and she kept it. In due season she was delivered of a beautiful boy. The name she gave him was Rupert or Rhuwerth. It is of him that this tradition chiefly tells.

Rupert was now her only joy. She resolved that nothing should be neglected on her part to qualify him for the station of a pious man, a Christian prince, and a lover of peace; for to the absence of these qualifications, to the rugged temper, the love of strife, and the profession of heathenism, she attributed all her husband's evil actions.

"My Rupert," she said, "shall be like his wretched sire in no one particular. He shall be his opposite in every respect, if God wills it, and I am enabled to do his will."

In accordance with this view she instilled, on all occasions, into his young mind lessons of virtue and of religion; and she spared no pains to make his character as mild and as pure, as that of his father was rugged and tainted. But she had no occasion to take any pains with him: Heaven appeared to have compensated in the son for the defects of the sire; and the seeds of truth and goodness scarcely required to be sown in the soul of the beautiful boy, for they seemed to spring up in spontaneous luxuriance from that bountiful soil. All this was most gratifying to the heart of his tender mother; and her happiness daily grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength. Not so, however, was it with his father. That hapless man derided the education which the fond mother bestowed on her child;—termed it, in scorn, womanish and effeminate;—threatened to remove him from her care;—and, finally, pursued with greater avidity than ever the low amours which he loved to indulge in, and the bloody feuds which seemed to be, as it were, the sole end of his existence. In one of these quarrels, which he set on foot with a friend for lack of a stranger on whom to exercise his passion for fight—borne away by his impetuous courage, he ventured alone into the thickest of the fray, and was slain. It was a happy deliverance for his afflicted spouse, and might have been regarded as a special interposition of Providence in her favour; for, on his return, he had arranged to transfer his boy, her only hope, to the care

of one of his rudest retainers, to the end that he might be reared up in such a manner as to imitate only his own actions. God spared this blow to the tender mother, and avenged the long train of sorrows which her unfeeling husband had caused on her unresisting gentleness.

When Bertha was informed of his death, she mourned as a wife should mourn, and remembered in that moment, only the apparent good which she had once fondly imagined in his character, at the period of her wooing and their nuptials; then, accompanied by a faithful servant and a few men-at-arms, she left the Castle of Laubenheim, the scene of her sufferings, and, together with her beloved Rupert, set forth for the abode of her father at Bingen. She was received by her sire with a love which was long unknown to her; and a separate establishment was granted to her by his paternal affection. There, in peace and in happiness, she continued to pursue the plan she had laid down for the instruction of her son, rejecting all the offers of a second marriage, which her youth, and beauty, and splendid prospects attracted, and nobly overcoming each of the many and powerful temptations to it which beset her on every side. Not even the entreaties of her venerable sire could induce her to alter her resolution. She declared herself from thenceforth, to the termination of her mortal career, devoted to the service of God and the education of her son; and nothing was found capable of changing her purpose. This known, she was no more molested by selfish suitors, or disinterested admirers of her loveliness and virtues; for such, even in those remote days, there were, as in modern times.

In the meanwhile, the young Rupert, the object of all her maternal solicitude, grew apace in beauty and in goodness. Not a particle of the rugged nature of his sire did he seem to inherit; or if he did, it had been carefully effaced by the anxious cares of his affectionate mother: yea, such was the gentleness of his character, that he could never be brought to delight in those knightly exercises, those feats of strength and dexterity, then the pride of the young nobility of Europe, and deemed an especial and indispensable accomplishment to birth and station. On the contrary, he experienced more delight in performing works of peace and charity—in consorting with the pious and humane—in relieving the poor and the needy. His chief pleasure consisted in seeking

out the most destitute children in the town and its vicinity, and bringing them altogether into the presence of his mother. Often, on such occasions, would he thus speak to the happy Bertha :

“ Mother, my sweet mother, here are thy children whom I have brought thee.”

And the pious Bertha, embracing him, would never fail to reply, while tears of joy streamed adown her lovely cheeks :

“ Yes, my dearest son, you are right ; they are thy brothers.”

And then she would feed and clothe them for the love of God and of her boy, until their little hearts were glad, and they went away, blessing both mother and son. Nay, one day, when the pious Bertha gave orders for the erection of a magnificent oratory in their abode, the kind Rupert said to her, in the words of the Evangelist, pointing at the same time to the poor people who crowded the court-yard for their daily dole :

“ Mother, sweet mother—first break your bread with the hungry, clothe the naked with thy clothes, and bring the wandering stranger into thy house, for these are the living temples of the Holy Spirit !”

Bertha received this reproof as though it came from Heaven ; and postponed the erection of the oratory until she could no longer find a needy person on whom to bestow any of that which she meant to employ as a fund for raising this edifice.

But though this goodly life, and these kind actions of the young Rupert, won the love and admiration of the poor, they were not so successful with the rich, and the great, and the noble. It comported little with the customs of princes at that period, more than at this, to mix thus freely with their subjects, and to make themselves their own almoners with the distressed. Many of his father's feudatories sneered at the piety of the youth, and his deficiency in the knowledge of arms, then deemed a primary essential in a sovereign ; others, more kindly disposed towards him, conceded that to do good works, to relieve the poor, to succour the needy, to clothe the naked, and to comfort the distressed, were knightly acts, it was true, because old histories and legends of the saints, particularly of one of the patron saints of Bingen, St. Martin, had so stated ; but then they argued it was by no means seemly in him to abandon altogether the use and practice of arms, and the exercises of war and the tourney, as he had

done ; because arms and valour were the best defence of the weak against the strong, and gave the most effective power to serve those who needed service. Some, especially the youthful nobility, the scions of old stocks, nearly his own age, with the heedless and inconsiderate levity of their years, were wont to look on him contemptuously, and say, that it more beseemed his station to apply himself as they did, to the knowledge of knightly exercises, than to degrade his dignity by associating solely with beggar boys. So strong did this feeling become, and so generally did it prevail among them, that, though previously accustomed to seek him in crowds, they now avoided him. But neither sport, nor scorn, nor pity, nor well-meant advice, could divert the current of the pious youth's feelings into any other channel than the pure and profitable one in which it had flowed from his birth, under the direction of his beloved mother. Unheeding censure, pardoning unkindness, returning thanks for reproach, he pursued the even tenor of his way, and went on rejoicing,—causing the necessitous to rejoice. His presence made the poor and the destitute happy ; and comfort and consolation accompanied him to the dwellings of the desolate, and the homes of the afflicted. A happy mother was the beautiful Bertha. Even, his aged grandsire prided himself on the piety and goodness of the boy, though bred himself in the practice of the sterner virtues of bravery and princely government.

One lovely spring morning, as the first rays of the rising sun tipped the summit of the dark forest which then covered the opposite shore of the river above Rudesheim, Rupert wandered forth from the palace of his mother, and betook him to the water's edge. The broad stream lay like a mirror beneath his eye—the bright sun tinted the horizon with a thousand inimitable hues—the dew sparkled on the trees, and in the bushes, and on the long grass—and the early birds chirped their matin-hymn from the neighbouring thickets, like a choir of blest spirits, singing unseen, the praise of their Creator. It was, in sooth, as sweet a scene as ever poet fancied or painter drew. Rupert's soul expanded with the opening day ;—he prayed aloud in the fulness of his heart ; and a thousand echoes seemed to respond to his prayer. This done, he sate him down on a mossy bank which sloped even to the smooth river's edge. A deep sleep fell on him as he sate ;

and in that sleep he dreamed a dream. He thought that an old man, with a long white beard and a most reverend aspect, stood at a little distance from him on the margin of the stream; and that several boys about his own age crowded around. The old man was clothed in a flowing milk-white garb, edged with violet-coloured fringe; the boys were all without any garments. Ever and anon one of the youths would leap into the crystal flood and disappear for a moment; on his return to the shore the old man would draw a silken towel, which he held in his hand, over his shoulders; and, wonderful to relate, the boy would assume, as it were, a new shape—so much more beautiful did he become than he was before. As the young Rupert gazed on the scene with delight, his ears were ravished by the most delightful music. He looked out on the river, and, behold, there arose a lovely island, all of a sudden, in the centre of the stream. It was like another Eden—so far did it surpass all that he had ever seen on earth. Emerald meadows—flowers of the richest odour and rarest hues—shadowy groves, through which the sunbeams lighted tenderly on the green sward beneath—noble trees, full of blossoms and fruit at the same moment—and crystal fountains, bursting like light from the rocks, and flinging their living waters, like silver girdles, over the rejoicing fields. Birds of all the colours of the rainbow, and of every species known on earth for beauty, flitted about in the boughs of the over-arching trees, or hopped on the rivulet banks, bathing their gay plumage in the gurgling waters; while, in the deep recesses of the groves, tens of thousands of feathered warblers united in a magnificent chorus, like that of the harps of heaven, in honour of the Redeemer. But what seemed far beyond all comprehension, was the celestial rosy atmosphere shed over this magic scene; and the precious odours which seemed to make a portion of the essence of the air breathed by its blessed inhabitants. The old man beckoned, and a gilded barque put off from the island; it was moved by an invisible power, for no one was perceptible in it; and it touched the ground at his feet, where he stood surrounded by his troop of innocents. He spake to them words of joy; they entered; he stepped in after them; and in a moment more they all leaped ashore on that lovely island. Here the good old man gave each of the children a snow-white garment, and bade them go forth and play in the meadows, and

in the gardens, and take their full of the abundance of enjoyment which that paradise offered to their acceptance. Like young antelopes, forth rushed the happy boys; and Rupert, springing up in an ecstasy of delight, thus prayed to the hoary ancient:—

“Oh, let me ever tarry with these happy, happy boys, in that abode of the blessed.”

The old man looked graciously on him, and smiled; but, in answer to his prayers, he thus spake:—

“Blessed boy, thy eternal abode is not here but in a better place. Thou hast done the appointed work through good report and through evil; and thou hast built with it for thyself a bridge to the highest heaven. There, in the face of God, the companion of his most beloved saints, shalt thou dwell for ever. The bread which thou hast broken with the poor and the hungry shall be the bread of life for thee; and the garments which thou gavest to the naked shall form for thee a robe of innocence fit for heaven. Behold!”

The happy Rupert looked, and lo! a rainbow of the brightest tints arose at once from the centre of the island, and stretched upwards to the empyrean. From base to summit it was covered with crowds of God’s angels, garbed in the hues of heaven, and flitting about like sunbeams through a forest of young trees in early summer, when the foliage is green and the leaf tender. Silver clouds floated in the pure atmosphere like ethereal pillows. On the summit of the celestial arch sat the infant Saviour, in the lap of his virgin mother; beside him was a snow-white lamb, with a rosy band around its innocent neck; before him knelt the young St. John. The Holy Spirit swept over them in the form of a spotless dove. Anon, as the youth gazed, two seraphims, of surpassing stateliness and beauty, approached the Redeemer, and laid at his feet a fair garment. Rupert gazed on the scene with a pleasing surprise, for in it he saw a garb he had not long before given to a poor shivering child, who begged at his mother’s palace gate on a raw wintry morning. The infant Saviour then stood up in the Virgin’s lap, and thus spake to the assembled hierarchy of heaven:—

“Here is the garment which the little Rupert gave me. For

this shall he be clothed for ever with sanctity. Come hither, thou blessed boy."

The enraptured Rupert approached the presence of God.

"Take this," said the Saviour, "and be for ever blessed."

He stretched forth his hand and Rupert bowed his head; millions of celestial voices then hymned out in praise of the Lamb; all heaven echoed with the melody; the very stars seemed to start from their spheres with rejoicing.

"Arise," resumed the Redeemer, "and take thy place in my kingdom."

Again the harps of heaven sounded; and again the melting voice of melodious song filled the immensity of space. Rupert awoke. At his feet was the poor little boy to whom he had given the clothes in his dream; and before him rolled the rapid river like a sea of molten gold, in the bright beams of the morning sun.

Filled with indescribable emotions, he took the child by the hand, and bent his steps homeward. Arrived there he presented the boy to his mother, and told her of his dream. She was greatly delighted at it, for she deemed it a manifestation of Divine Providence in his behalf, and a presentiment of his certain happiness in the future world. From that day forth the young Rupert determined to devote himself to the service of God; and, as a first step to qualify himself for it, he resolved on a pilgrimage to Rome, to visit the grave of the Prince of the Apostles. He informed his mother of this resolution one evening as she sat in her oratory; but her tender heart was terrified at the idea, and she tried to dissuade him from his design.

"My beloved boy," she said to him, "you are too young and too weak for such a toilsome journey. Besides, you are my only child; and then, bethink thee of the sorrow thy loss would cause to my fond heart. On you, too, the preservation of our princely line, and the hopes of your grandsire's subjects, rest. Can you entertain for another moment the idea of abandoning them? Besides, it needs not to make a pilgrimage to far lands to render ourselves acceptable in the sight of God; good works, any where done, will receive the same recompense."

The steadfast piety of the youth was shaken by the arguments

and entreaties of his tender mother ; and he consented for her sake to forego his resolution during his boyhood.

“No, my mother,” said he, while he hung on her neck and bathed her cheek with his tears ; “No, my dearest mother, I shall not abandon you now.”

Bertha kissed her fair boy’s forehead, and blessed him with a mother’s blessing. He kept his word with her ; and never more, until his maturity, mentioned aught of the matter in her presence.

But the season of puberty was now passed ; adolescence had succeeded the happy days of boyhood ; and Rupert was of an age to take proper care of himself : yet did not years alter the original bent of his nature. Bertha desired nothing better than to see her beloved son an accomplished knight, as well as a truly Christian prince ; and to that end she introduced him to the company of cavaliers, from all countries ; and to noble maidens, the flower of the high Teutonic families. But in vain were the exhortations of the chivalry by whom he was surrounded ; in vain were the charms of fair dames and lovely virgins : the one altogether failed to excite him to deeds of strife ; the other were of no power to turn his thoughts from the contemplation of the purer beauties of religion. He gave the strongest manifestations of desire for a pious life ; and intimated to his mother an unalterable intention of completing that pilgrimage to Rome which, in his childish days, he had foregone at her solicitation. She endeavoured to dissuade him once more : but he was now not to be diverted from his purpose. Tears and entreaties no longer availing, she gave a reluctant consent to his departure ; and he prepared, without an instant’s delay, for the tedious and toilsome journey.

Laying down the proud mantle of royalty, and divesting himself of his useless glaive, he assumed the coarse garb of a pilgrim, his only arms a strong staff, and in this guise set out for the eternal city. His journey was a long and a lonely one ; but he surmounted, with the patience of a saint, the rugged Alps, and saw, with the equanimity and self-denial of a martyr, the lovely land of Italy. The pilgrimage of this pious youth was performed entirely on foot, and he was unattended by a single

follower. Arrived at Rome, he visited all those places consecrated to the genius, the sufferings, the history, and the triumph of Christianity ; and performed his devotions at each shrine with the fervour of a faithful votary of the cross. But, before all, he visited the tomb of the Prince of the Apostles, which stands now beneath the dome of that wonder of the world St. Peter. There, in a rapture of religious feeling, he vowed another vow,—that he would relinquish the pleasures of sovereignty to be the humblest servant of the church, and dispose of all his superfluous property among the poor and the afflicted. This done, he returned to Bingen by the same route he had departed from it, and in the same lowly and painful manner.

Bertha received her beloved son as might be expected ; she covered him with caresses, and wept over him as over one long lost and never more expected. He told her of his pilgrimage, and he spake to her of his vow. Her heart had been so long turned towards heaven, that she had not a thought for earth save what centered in her darling son ; so she offered no opposition to his views, but cordially approved of them. He then set about fulfilling his vow ; and he kept it to the letter.

From that time forward he lived more the life of a recluse in the desert, than that of one of the most powerful sovereign princes in Germany. But he was not spared long to his people ; and perhaps it was a mercy that he was cut off in youth before lawlessness had taken head in his dominions. Ere he had completed his twentieth year he died, worn out by the fatigue of his pilgrimage to Rome, and the acerbities he had practised on his return. His mother survived him but a few months. They were both buried in the same grave, in the ancient collegiate church of Bingen.

In later times, Rupert received the honour of canonization ; and his pilgrim's garb, the only relic remaining of him to posterity, was enwrapped in a magnificent purple mantle and enshrined in the convent of Eubingen, on the other side of the Rhine above Rudesheim.

This legend of St. Rupert is derived from the authority of the celebrated prophetess Hildegard, abbess of the convent of St. Rupertsberg, contemporary and fellow-labourer of St. Ber-

nard in exciting the nobles of Germany to the second crusade, who claimed descent from the ancient dukes of Bingen, of whose direct line the subject of this tale was the last male issue inheriting the title. Mention has already been made of her.

Bingen subsequently passed into the possession of various princes, the chief of which were the archbishops of Mainz and Treves. A colony of Lombard merchants, from Asti in Piedmont, settled there in the middle ages, and greatly benefited the town and neighbourhood by the extension of traffic.

In the year 1302, the army of the Emperor Albert beleaguered Bingen, and threatened to extirpate the inhabitants. And one-and-twenty years afterwards the town was the scene of a series of the most sanguinary executions, arising out of a quarrel caused by the trifling circumstance of striking a dog. This quarrel originated between the boatmen and the butchers, in consequence of one of the latter beating a hound belonging to one of the former; and the towns-folk participating in it as it took head, several lives were lost in the affray which ensued. The butchers bore away the victory; but they paid dearly for it soon afterwards. When peace and order were restored, and the law enabled to take its course, several of the delinquents were beheaded; some were mutilated—their hands and feet being cut off; and many were banished from the town for ever.

Bingen shared the fate of the other towns and cities on the Rhine in the subsequent changes which took place on that river. It is now the property of the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt.

KLOPP.

Directly above Bingen, on a high hill overlooking and commanding that city, stand the ruins of Klopp, supposed to have been originally built by Drusus Germanicus. It was subsequently tenanted by the unfortunate Emperor Henry the Fourth, of whom the following tradition is related.

HENRY THE FOURTH DEPOSED.

It was Christmas night, in the year 1105; a thick sheeting of snow covered the hills and the valleys in the vicinity of Bingen, the roofs and battlements of the houses in that old town, the fortifications which surrounded it, and, above all, the strong castle of Klopp, then standing erect in all its pride of power, dominant over the entire neighbourhood: yet was there joy in every heart which looked on that cheerless scene, or dwelt within its circle, save in one. Why was it so? and who was this man of sorrow?

In the coved recess of a narrow-grated window of the castle of Klopp, situated high up in the rere-ward tower from the town, stood a man advanced in years, looking out on that picture of wintry desolation, as it lay below him in the cold, clear light of the winter moon. His aspect was, at the same time, noble and sad; his long gray hairs streamed in the chill gusts which came, ever and anon, from the river up the steep ascent on which the castle stood; and his form, though stately, seemed bent like the aged and weather-beaten oak. But still it was evident that sorrow had anticipated age in his constitution; that grief and vexation of heart had done the work of time; and that the weight of heavy troubles, more than the pressure of years, had bowed that erect form, and brought nearer to the earth that majestic brow. There was, however, a dignity and a grandeur in his aspect which shewed at once that he was no common man; and though his eyes were filled with tears, the flashes which they occasionally emitted, as his thoughts reverted to the past, or fluttered over the dim future, proved that he was one accustomed in his early life to command, unknowing what it was to be disobeyed. This melancholy being—this solitary in the midst of social joy—this mourner in that season of universal mirth—was the hapless Emperor Henry the Fourth.

Already has it been told how his treacherous and unnatural son decoyed him to Bingen, and there made him a close prisoner in the strong castle of Klopp.* That very morning the miserable sire had been betrayed: and he now stood in his prison window, musing on the instability of human hopes—the baseness of human feelings; wishing himself buried in his grave when he thought of the hand which had shut him up in that tower, on this the anniversary of man's redemption.

He had been not long in this position when the braying of trumpets, the tramp of horses, and the shouts of men, were borne on his ear by the breeze of night; and looking towards the town he beheld the narrow streets crowded with troops, lighted onwards by torches, and headed by two armed individuals, who seemed neither wholly warriors nor altogether civilians, judging from the singular and anomalous costume in which they

* Vol. i. (§ Hammerstein. The Emperor Henry the Fourth.) p. 415.

were clothed. Their long under-garments denoted in that period the clerical dignity; but the mantles which covered their shoulders were those then worn only by dubbed knights. The glistening sabres borne in their upraised hands indicated aught but the apostleship of peace: yet the ecclesiastical stole and cingulum, peering forth from the folds of their cloaks, seemed part of the proper garb of a priest. To render the anomaly still more complete, their heads were defended by curiously constructed helms of tempered steel, fashioned in the fore-part to resemble the front of a mitre, and surmounted by the cross the symbol of Christianity. The puzzled monarch knew not what to make of the scene, or how to imagine the actors; he was lost in perplexity and amazement at its singularity; and could not, with all his efforts, divine its cause. He was soon to feel its effects.

Even while he stood there, in that grated window, torturing his soul with vain surmises, an armed man entered the narrow chamber. The emperor started and turned towards the intruder; a flash of indignation lit up his clouded eye; he drew himself up to his full height, and stood erect to receive him: but it was only the warder to whose especial charge he had been confided: and, with a sensation of sickness at heart, he once more looked forth on the advancing cohort.

“My lord,” spake the warder, in a hesitating manner ——

“What would ye?” asked Henry, sharply. “Why thus intrude upon my solitude? Am I not wretched enough already?” he added, after a momentary pause, in which he dashed a tear from his overflowing eye,—“Am I not wretched enough already? Must I be made more so? Oh, my son! my son!”

The miserable monarch could not suppress his emotions—he hung down his head, and wept aloud, even as David over the untimely fate of his rebel son Absalom. When he raised his eyes, he saw that the warder was weeping also; and he heard the thick sobs he uttered, as the stalwart soldier, tried to suppress his emotions. The desolate heart is easily touched;—Henry felt at once the love of a brother for one who could sympathise with his sorrows;—his indignation had all vanished.

“My friend,” he said, when the moment of grief had passed over,—“my friend, know ye what is the meaning of this scene?”

He pointed to the cavalcade, as he spoke. The warder looked forth; it had almost reached the summit of the hill; a herald, was even within a few yards of the castle gate.

"My lord and master," replied the man, "I know it too well. Alas! the day that ever it should be: they come hither to depose you."

"Who are they?" asked the monarch. His eye once more lighted up with the fire of youth. "Who dares depose me?"

"Most gracious emperor," replied he, "they are the spiritual electors, the Archbishops of Cologne and Mainz; and they dare do any thing."

"Strip me of my dignity! Depose me from the empire! No! never!" exclaimed the excited Henry, unheeding the observation of his humble friend, and pacing up and down the apartment like a chafed lion in his cage.

"They come even now from the diet held this day in Mainz. You have been deposed there, and your son solemnly elected in your stead. They come to announce the decision of the diet, and deprive you of the insignia of the empire."

Henry still paced to and fro in the small chamber; and ever and anon he would stamp on the stone floor, and clench his fists, as though he were in the act of annihilating an enemy. But he uttered no word more.

"My lord and rightful sovereign," continued the warden.

Henry stopped short in his career.

"You alone faithful to me!" he exclaimed, grasping the hand of the good old man. "The blessing of a broken-hearted father be upon you!"

A big tear coursed down his cheek, as he uttered the words; the warder's eyes too were wet; his heart was in his throat; he could not find utterance for some moments.

"My lord! my emperor!" at length he gasped, "I am here to shew you the way to escape. Your only safety is in flight."

"Flight!" scornfully exclaimed the monarch, once more excited; "flight! never! Henry of Franconia's name was never yet coupled with the word flight."

A bugle-note was borne upwards on the breeze.

"They are at the gate," cried the warder, making for the door of the chamber.

"Stay, my friend," said Henry; "one word. Say who you are, and why this interest in my fate. Though I avail myself not of your offer now, I know not yet how much I may need it. The time is out of joint."

"My lord and emperor," replied he, in hurried and broken sentences, "we emerged on the career of life together; and I have been your follower in every campaign that you undertook. I was made captive in your last battle; and, to save my life, I was obliged to serve the Archbishop of Mainz. But to you I plighted my allegiance; and you alone shall have it. I, too, am a father!"——

"I thank you," said Henry; "your truth and fidelity shall not be forgotten by me. We meet again."

The monarch waved his hand to withdraw, as he spake; and his humble friend accordingly quitted the apartment. He retired himself to his sleeping chamber, closing the door after him.

The apartment he had left was not many moments vacant. As the armed men poured into the court-yard of the castle, their leaders ascended the narrow staircase; and the stone steps resounded to the clank of spurs, and the heavy tread of mailed knights and warriors. The Archbishops of Cologne and Mainz were the first to enter; their followers were quick upon their heels; staircase, and ante-chamber, and hall were soon crowded.

"Henry of Franconia," spake a herald, garbed in the livery of the empire,— "Henry of Franconia, lately Emperor of Germany, by the grace of God and the good-will of the imperial diet, stand out and hear the sentence that has gone forth against thee from the assembled electors. God save the emperor!"

The door of the hapless monarch's sleeping-room opened even as the herald spake, and Henry himself, clad in all the insignia of royalty, suddenly stood among his enemies. The presence of the majestic old man, arrayed in the panoply of state—the imperial purple descending in long folds from his shoulders, the crown of Charlemagne on his head, the sceptre of empire in his hand, and the old imperial sword, once worn by that mightiest of German monarchs, girt round his loins —

dismayed even them for a moment; and they started back with an expression of reverence and awe from the lordly glance of the helpless prisoner they were there to persecute. But the feeling was only momentary; there was far too much at stake to let them long hesitate.

"Ruthard of Mainz," spake the emperor solemnly, "and you, Archbishop of Cologne," he continued, alternately addressing these spiritual princes, "what would you of me? Why are ye here in this rude guise? Whence the cause of this armed following?"

They answered not for some instants; they felt abashed, wicked though they were, in the presence of their sovereign. The crowd which filled the chamber looked reverentially on the old man, the anointed of the Lord, their aged emperor. All waited in silence the reply of the princes. At length outspake the Archbishop of Mainz, standing forward in front of his followers:

"Henry of Franconia, we are here to depose you from the imperial dignity, and to deprive you of the ensigns of empire. It is the decree of the diet. We are but its agents. Your son and successor, Henry the Fifth, is now our rightful sovereign, God save the emperor!"

The mutable mob shouted a *viva* for the unnatural son; and mingled the names of the God of Justice and Truth with that of the monster.

"God save the emperor, Henry the Fifth!" was their cry.

"But wherefore this?" inquired the aged emperor, whose courage seemed to rise commensurately with the occasion; "am I not your crowned sovereign? Who can depose me?"

"You have simoniacally sold the opulent bishoprics and rich abbacies of the empire," said the Archbishop of Mainz.

"You are cut off from all communion with the Church of God, and under the ban of our most holy father, the pope," interposed the Archbishop of Cologne.

"You are anathema," exclaimed both.

The superstitious crowd crossed themselves, and shrunk backwards involuntarily. Excommunication in those days of darkness and error was a fearful thing; and worse than the leper, or the sick of the pest, was he looked on who lay under the ban of the church.

“Ruthard of Mainz,” pursued the emperor, dignifiedly, “have I ever taken fee or reward for the rich diocese I conferred upon thee?”

The haughty, turbulent, treacherous prelate, cast down his eyes; he could not answer; he was taken by surprise, never having contemplated such a question.

“Archbishop of Cologne,” continued Henry, turning from the conscience-stricken traitor to his trembling *confrère*, “hast paid me yet for the ecclesiastical principality you enjoy by my gift?”

The guilty priest seemed as though he wished the mountains to fall on him and cover him. He stood before his injured sovereign as it is said the wicked will stand before the Lord at the last day of general judgment.

“Who is it that dares depose me?” said the monarch, drawing himself up to his full height, and looking down on his foes with a lofty expression of scorn and contempt. “Who is my master?”

There were too many interests at issue, and too great a risk was involved, for his enemies to permit him to make an impression even on their own followers; and accordingly the abashed traitors soon recovered their affrighted composure.

“Ha! by God!” exclaimed the Archbishop of Mainz, greatly chafed as he spoke, “are we not the diet? Have we not the power of electing?”

“Who questions our power to depose, as we have elected? —to unmake, as we have made? By the rood, but that is good!” ejaculated the Archbishop of Cologne, angrily.

“I do!” said Henry. “You are my subjects. Away from my sight!”

The question was speedily brought to a decision.

“Henry of Franconia, I depose thee, in the name of the high and most puissant diet of the empire, assembled this day in the ancient city of Mainz. God save Henry the Fifth!”

With these words Ruthard stretched forth his hand to his sovereign; and the next moment he had torn the imperial mantle from his shoulders. The crown, sceptre, and sword, soon shared the same fate.

“God’s will be done!” said the deposed monarch, casting

his tearful eyes upwards. "I am fearfully punished for the sins of my youth. But take heed ye who have raised your hands against your rightful sovereign—ye who have defiled the sacred person of the Lord's anointed—that ye repent not. Ye have broken my bread, and partaken of my bounty—see that ye die not the death of the traitor Judas."

The wretched old man left the room as he concluded, and shut himself up in his sleeping chamber. The conspirators departed, satisfied with the result of their mission. Thus ended the reign of the fourth Henry of Germany.*

Five years did this poor monarch languish a miserable captive, neglected, ill-treated, and despised : often wanting bread, and always lacking the most trifling approach to comfort : an inhabitant of various prisons ; that is to say, of Bokelheim, Ingelheim, and Klopp, alternately. His escape, and the close of his life, is related more at large in a former portion of these volumes.† It was from Klopp, however, that he addressed a most affecting letter to Philip the First of France, praying his interposition in his behalf. The original document is said to be still in existence. The passages subjoined are extracted from a very valuable work on German history,‡ in which the original is given entire.

"As soon as I had entered the castle of Bingen, I found myself made captive, together with three of my attendants."

* * * * *

"Not only has the sword been drawn against me, but, what I can never forget, I was compelled to pass the holy Christmas day in this prison, without hearing mass, or receiving the blessed sacrament, or having an opportunity of attending any manner of Divine service."

"I speak not of the invective, the injuries, the disgrace I have to suffer : of the hunger, the thirst, the cold I endure :

* History and tradition differ as to the place of his deposition ; the former places it, and, I believe, truly, in Ingelheim ; the latter, it is seen, in the castle of Klopp.

† Vide "Hammerstein ;" "The Flight," vol. i. p. 440, &c.

‡ Barre's "Allgemeine Geschichte von Deutschland," B. iii. s. 176, &c.

may, even of the blows inflicted on my helpless gray hairs, when I murmur or repine at my hard fate ; though I feel them all, indignities, injuries, and privations the more acutely, comparing my present state with that which it once was."

* * * * *

" The thought of my son fills my heart with the deepest indignation and the keenest sorrow ; yet, at the same time, I yearn to him with the love of a father for his only child."

* * * * *

" I fling myself even at the feet of my child ;—I pray to him on my bended knees ;—I bow my aged head in the dust before him ; and in that lowly condition I conjure him, by his hopes of happiness here and hereafter, in the name of the Omnipotent God, who holds the destinies of empires in the hollow of his hand, by the oath he has sworn to be faithful and true to his sire and his sovereign, by every thing, in short, which men deem sacred in this world, that if I am to be chastised by a just Maker for the sins of my youth, he, at least, shall not be the voluntary scourge in the hands of an offended Divinity ;—that he, at least, shall not be the instrument of vengeance—if not for my sake, for his own. But in vain ! I may not turn his mind from its cruel purpose ; and no prayers, no entreaty, no representation of mine, can divert him from a deed which, though it makes him the instrument of God's award, still, will cover him, to all eternity, with the guilt of shameless ingratitude, and give him to posterity the character of a monstrous man, and a most unnatural son."

This document is a great deal longer ; but these extracts must suffice. They are sufficient to move to pity a heart of stone.

RUDESHEIM.

" Who knows not Rudesheim ? " asks an enthusiastic Rhenish traveller ;* " who hath ever tasted of its nectar without blessing the glorious vineyards which give existence to that godlike beverage ? " He is right : few fail to do so ; and fewer still

* Dr. Storck, " Darstellung aus dem Preussischen Rhein-und-Moselland." 1 Bandchen, 1818.

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RÜDERSHEIM

Published by F.C. Westley, Childs Place, Temple Bar

there are in civilized Europe who know not, at least, the name of this far-famed locality.

But Rudesheim is also celebrated for other things besides its rich wines; here it was that the rugged old knight, Hans Brömser, the ruins of whose castles still exist, had his abode; and here also it was, that his obdurate determination to devote her to the service of Heaven, caused the destruction, by suicide, of his daughter—the fair, the fond, the gentle Gisella.

This is the story of her fate; and even now, although nearly nine centuries have elapsed since she lived and loved—if ever she had being—fair eyes weep, and fond hearts grieve, over her sorrowful lot and untimely end. Peace be with her!

GISELLA BRÖMSER.

At the time when the blessed Saint Bernard of Clairvaux preached the second crusade at Spiers,* along with many other knights and nobles dwelling on the shores of the Rhine, Sir Hans Brömser of Rudesheim departed for Palestine. During his sojourn there he achieved great feats by his prowess and his strength; and his name was honoured, in consequence, among the crusaders, while it was held in fear and reverence by the Saracens. In a wild rocky dell of that country dwelt a loathly dragon, which had long been the terror of the Christian host: for never had knight or squire who went forth to slay him, returned. He had destroyed them all, one after another, to the number of several hundreds; and all men, therefore, thought on him with much dread and detestation. What made the evil worse, was, that the dell in which his den lay, was the only one for leagues around which afforded wood and water for the service of the army; and as he paid no more respect to servants and sutlers than he did to the knights and nobles who encountered him, there was soon a scarcity of these necessary commodities in the camp. Hans Brömser, however, undeterred by the fate of those who had gone before him, determined to destroy this dreadful monster, or perish in the attempt. Arming himself

* A.D. 1146. This crusade ended in 1148; and the following year, 1149, Conrad, emperor of Germany, returned to Europe with the shattered remains of his immense army.

cap-à-piè, with helm, hauberk, shield, sword, and spear, he went forth to seek the common enemy. He soon found him : and they were immediately after engaged in deadly conflict. The fight lasted long ; but it happily ended in the discomfiture and destruction of the dragon. Just at the moment, however, that he had slain him, and as he was preparing to cut off his head, to bring back to the camp as a trophy of his victory, a cloud of Saracens, who had lain in ambush during the fight, rushed on him, weary and worn as he was with his hard toil : notwithstanding a most valorous defence, overpowering him by the weight of their numbers, and bearing him off to their fastness, they flung him into one of its deepest dungeons. For three long years he endured all the privations, the wrongs and the insults, which his ruthless keepers could devise or inflict on him : and day after day waxed and waned, until at length he had scarcely a single hope left him to cheer his solitude or to alleviate his misery. At last he bethought him of the Virgin Mother, and her power with the Saviour : and in the extremity of his affliction and despair, he vowed her a vow, that if she would aid him to return once more to his beloved Rhine-land, he would devote his dear and only child, his lovely daughter Gisella, to her service for ever. His vow was heard, as it would appear ; for, shortly afterwards, the fortress in which he had so long languished in captivity, was assaulted and taken by a body of German crusaders, his own countrymen, on their return home, and he was once more restored to light, and life—to liberty. On recovering his freedom, he set about accomplishing the vow, to which he believed he owed it ; and, exchanging his arms and armour for the coarse garb, the “saddled shoon,” the scallop-shell, and the rude staff of the palmer, he set out on his return for Europe. He never stopped nor stayed on his road until he arrived, weary and wasted with fatigue and travel, at his castle of Rudesheim, accompanied only by a few faithful followers, who had assumed the pilgrim’s costume also. Big scalding tears coursed each other down his worn and furrowed cheeks, and trickled in large drops from his long white beard, as he glanced once again on the embattled towers of his forefathers ; but when his beauteous daughter, decked like a queen, rushed forth to meet him, with a crowd of happy faces pressing forward

behind her, all shouting and dancing with joy for his return, he could only look up to the heavens, as if to require from it consolation. His heart was sorrowful with the thoughts which oppressed it; and, as he gazed on her fair face, he remembered alone the vow he had made, and the misery it might entail on the blithesome, happy, light-hearted, loving creature who hastened to welcome him with all the fondness of a pure, filial affection. She had grown in beauty as well as in age during the three dreary years of his captivity; and she now stood before him, a model of all that is most prized—all that is most perfect in woman. The overwhelming happiness she felt at her father's return communicated to her cheek an additional glow—to her eye almost an angelic lustre; and she looked on him, and laughed and wept, like a baby in the arms of its mother—but full of life, and splendour, and joy—lovely past earthly loveliness. But her joy was destined to be of short duration. Her father spake to her of his vow; and assured her of his irrevocable determination to fulfil it. This intelligence fell like a thunderbolt on her spirit. She sank at his feet—a faded flower; and only awoke to a thorough consciousness of her misery. Happiness—nay, even hope—had fled for ever! How was it?

Some months previous to the first intimation she had received of her father's arrival, her tender heart had been wooed and won by a young knight of the neighbourhood, who was in every way worthy of her love. They had planned, as lovers will do, the most enchanting prospects for the future; and life was to be for them, as it ever looks to those in the same interesting situation, one unvarying, unfading, uncloying round of delights—a combination of love, passion, hope, and pleasure—making earth a paradise, and all it contains blessed denizens of Heaven. There was no speech of her father's consent, for he was seldom thought of in their moments of loving communion. And, besides, they could not anticipate his refusal to their union, since Otto was his equal in blood and birth—his equal in wealth and in station;—and was, moreover, the son of an old friend, by whose side he had often fought and conquered when they were both younger men. When Gisella recovered her senses, and remembered the forlornness of her condition, she flung herself at her father's feet, embraced his knees, clasped them to her heaving bosom and beating

heart, and besought and implored him, with prayers and tears, to forego his resolution, and avert the dreaded doom which impended over her. She said she would renounce even her lover, her friends, her affections—all—every thing that she valued or prized upon earth, if he would consent in return not to thrust her forth a stranger from the home of her childhood, the scene of all the happiness she had as yet known in this world. She suggested to him how lone and cheerless would be his old age, without kith or kindred to rejoice it ; and she vowed to cheer and cherish his infirmities and his years, if permitted to dwell with him in his paternal towers. She finally reminded him of her departed mother, so beloved by him in her lifetime ; and recalled to his recollection the days of her own infancy, when he cradled her in his arms, and nursed her on his knee, with the pride and pleasure which a father alone can feel while contemplating the expanding promise of his sole and only offspring. But it was all in vain : her melting eloquence was poured into a deaf ear. Her sire was stern and inexorable ; and neither tears, nor prayers, nor entreaties, could turn him from his purpose. Alas ! what cruelties will not fanaticism commit, under the conviction that it is all for the honour of a God, who is composed only of peace, and love, and purity, and affection ! Hans Brömser not only refused her sternly, and with a harshness she had never known before, but he went further, and threatened to curse—to imprecate a father's curse upon her—nay, more, to curse her also by the ashes of her beloved mother, that both might rise up in judgment against her at the last day,—if she persisted any longer in her opposition to his will. It was done : her heart broke within her : the last feather had been laid on the load. She sunk under it.

All this passed in the room whose window still overlooks the river, the stream of which, then greatly swollen by the mountain rains, washed the base of the castle. It occupied but a few moments : both were too much in earnest—father and daughter—to waste time or words needlessly. When Gisella found that there was no longer hope for her—that her last trust, her own father, had failed her in her extremity—she rose slowly from the ground whereon she had prostrated herself—cast one look of mingled reproach and forgiveness on the stern old man—and retired, sighing heavily, to the deep, coved recess of that window. She

flung the casement wide open. It was late evening—a dusk, drear evening in the latter end of autumn—such a one as betokens a fearful night to come. The storm howled among the hills behind her; and its awful voice was reverberated, multiplied a hundred-fold by echo, from the rocky dells which intersected them. The river raged furiously below, threatening every moment to wash away the firm foundation of the castle, and carrying along with it in its rushing course large fragments of its banks down to the Binger Loch, where it heaved and foamed like the broad ocean: above all was blackness and desolation, unlit, save by an occasional flash of the forked lightning darting into the abyss below, and adding horror upon horror to the prospect; while, ever and anon, the thunder growled awfully, in unison with the roar of the wind and the raging of the wild waters,—a fearful diapason. The scene was terrific, beyond the comprehension of those who have only traversed the sweet valley of the Rhine in periods of elemental peace—of sunshine, and of flowers. Gisella looked out on it with a vacant eye: she seemed as though she heard or saw nothing which passed before, around, or above her. In the middle of the spacious chamber stood her father, chafing like a hunted boar—grim and gristly—drawn up to his full height—his long gray beard and snow-white locks streaming to the sudden gust of wind which followed the opening of the casement.

“I will curse you,” exclaimed the Crusader; “I will curse you with a father’s curse. The ashes of your mother shall curse you too. You will carry our curse along with you wherever you go, if ——”

Gisella shrieked and started back, as though she had seen a spectre; but her father’s aspect appalled her still more, and his anathema rung in her ears. One moment, and no more, she hesitated, or seemed to hesitate; the next, she sprang through the open casement; and the moment after, she was swallowed by the raging waters. A single splash was all the bereaved sire heard; no sight or sound beside denoted her destruction. Early next morning her body was found on the little rocky island where Hatto’s Tower stands, like the spirit of the river.

In the still evenings of late autumn, when all in this paradise seems peace and rest, the spirit of Gisella Brömser is seen to flit

around the ruins of the old castle of Rudesheim ; and belated travellers often hear her wailings—as soft, as sweet, and as melancholy, as the song of the love-lorn nightingale.

The old knight of Rudesheim sorrowed deeply for her death ; and he bitterly repented his own asperity and ruthlessness. To appease the tortures of his agonized conscience, he vowed to build a church to her memory, that her soul might by that means find peace. But he forgot his vow in time ; and her spirit was long left unpropitiated and unappeased, to endure the doom which his inexorable heart had contributed to inflict upon it. Once, however, at the midnight hour, a fearful dream or vision came over him. The horrid dragon which he had slain in Palestine stood beside his bed, and gaping wide its tremendous jaws, made as though it would swallow him at one gulp. But suddenly a pale, sad-looking female form, which he recognized in a moment as that of his daughter Gisella, flitted between him and the threatened danger ; on which the monster immediately disappeared. The spirit looked sorrowfully on the altered old man ; and then, sighing deeply, in a moment was seen no more. At that instant, the chains which he had worn during his sojourn in slavery among the Saracens, fell from the wall where they had been hung since his return, in memory of that event ; and he awoke at the loud crash, covered with a cold perspiration, his hair erect, and his whole frame convulsed with fear and trembling. The next morning one of his husbandmen came to him with an image of the Saviour, discovered under wondrous and mysterious circumstances. While ploughing up a neighbouring field, one of his oxen had disinterred it ; and, miraculous to relate, it had cried out for help on its restoration to the light of day. Brömser at once made preparations for the fulfilment of his vow ; and, on the spot where the image was discovered, he built a church and a cloister, which he named “ The Need of God.” The cloister still stands, in a rocky dingle not far from Rudesheim ; and the church exists also. In it are shewn the chains already mentioned as having been worn by Sir Haps Brömser in slavery among the Saracens, together with the dragon’s tongue, which, it is to be presumed, he had contrived to secure previous to his capture by the infidels.

In the castle, which is now the property of Prince Metternich, are many monuments of the olden time. In the great hall are pictures of all the former possessors, male and female ; and a

table, with their names, eras, scutcheons, and mottos. The horns of the ox which uprooted the image, are shewn in the castle ; and the image itself is still in the church of the village.* The state bed-room is painted on all sides with figures ; and the bridal-bed curtains are wrought in ancient needle-work with similar ones—in both cases subjects from the Old Testament, emblematic of love and truth in wedded life. Close by the bed itself is a very ancient chest. In the other apartments various chairs, footstools, and similar articles of furniture, all rugged and ill-formed, but strong and durable beyond modern articles of the same description, are everywhere visible.

ST. NICHOLAS AND THE BOATMAN.

In addition to the preceding legend, the following may be offered here, as connected with Rudesheim. It has the merit of doing poetical justice, if it has no other ; and, therefore, it must be admired by all honest men.

At Rudesheim, by Brömser's Burg,
There stands a cell of stone ;
And in it is an image of
St. Nicholas alone.

A boatman low before it bends—
He bends, and prays him so—
“Oh, holy saint! my little bark
Through Bingerloch let go.

* The following passage from Goethe's “ *Reise am Rhein, Mayn und Neckar, in Jähren, 1814 and 1815,*” alludes to this famous image.

“ In the parish church in the market-place (at Rudesheim,) is seen the miraculous image, which, in former times, attracted so many of the superstitious and credulous to ‘ The Need of God.’ It is a kneeling Christ, about eight inches high, with the hands upraised in the attitude of prayer ; and is probably the principal figure of an original group, representing the passion on the Mount of Olives. The drapery is of fine linen, pasted in some parts on the imperfect carving beneath it ; in others flowing : the sleeves hang freely. It is entirely chalked and painted. The hands are too long for the body, but the joints of the fingers and nails are well expressed. Altogether, it is a striking specimen of art at a period which was very backward, but still not wholly incapable of sculpture.”

"Let go my little bark but safe,
And once the peril past,
I vow to thee a taper tall—
Ay, tall as is her mast."

The friendly saint a willing ear
Lent to the lowly prayer :
The bark bounds onward merrily—
'Tis now in water fair.

Then loud did laugh the boatman then,
And thus outspake he free :
"The fish will never take the bait
Until it offered be."

And thus outspake that boatman then—
"May I be damned for aye,
Thou greedy saint, if ever I
My promise to thee pay.

"For now, that all is come and gone,
The peril was not great ;
And I'll just light a little stump
Before thy stony seat."

As still he spake, the bark's keel crack'd,
And rose the raging waters—
She sank. That mariner in Heaven,
Hath neither friends nor fautors.

ST. ROCHE'S CHAPEL.

On the summit of a high hill, almost directly opposite to Rudesheim, and a little above Bingen, stands the white Chapel of St. Roche, a conspicuous object in the lovely landscape which stretches around, and seen at a great distance up and down the river. The great German poet, Goethe, gives a very graphic and animated description of the first celebration of the feast-day of that saint, in the month of August 1814, after an intermission of a full quarter of a century, arising from the possession

of the Rhine by republican and imperial France from the period of the first revolution.*

It would occupy too much space in these pages, to offer a translation of it to the public ; but those who can read it in the original, will be amply recompensed by the pleasure it will not fail to afford them.

KEMPTEN.

A little in advance of the hill on which the Chapel of St. Roche is situated, in the direction of Mainz, stands the ancient hamlet of Kempten, on the left bank of the Rhine.

THE COCKFIGHT.

Though now an insignificant spot, Kempten was once a place of note ; for Charlemagne had a favourite residence there, to which he retired from the state and solemnity of Ingelheim whenever the pressure of business would permit him.

One day, in early summer, he rode thither from Ingelheim, together with his Empress Hildegard, and his three youthful sons, Pepin, Carl, and Ludwig. As he and his bride sat to dinner in a bower which bordered on the river, they conversed of many matters concerning the government of his extensive empire. Their sons, according to the custom of the age, stood behind, and waited on them, participating, in the meanwhile, in the conversation, and making remarks suited to their capacity.

“ Mother,” said Pepin, the eldest of the three, when a pause in the discourse of his parents occurred, so as to leave him opportunity for an observation ; “ Mother, when father is dead, shall not I then be emperor in his place ? ”

The emperor looked askant at the boy, and bethought him what a curse was ambition to mankind. The empress coloured to the eyes, but said nothing in reply.

“ No ! no ! ” cried Carl, looking lovingly on the emperor ; “ it shall not be Pepin—it shall be me—shall it not, father ? ”

* “ Aus einer Reise am Rhein, Mayn und Neckar, in den Jahren, 1814 and 1815,” &c. i. “ Sanct Rochus, Fest zu Bingen, am 16 August, 1814.”

Again did the emperor think of the curse of ambition, which could taint and infect even minds so young and innocent. The empress was quite unhappy, and frowned, and bit her lips ; but the boy was heedless of her anger, and the expression of her feelings.

“ It must not be,” said Ludwig, the youngest of the three ; “ I am sure that I shall be emperor when father dies ; for father and mother are so fond of me.”

The other two boys made common cause against the youthful aspirant to the imperial dignity ; and, but for the presence of their parents, might have inflicted some injury on him.

“ Cursed ambition !” thought Charlemagne. “ You make a man’s own blood boil up against him—you turn a man’s right arm against himself—you poison the peace of princes—you cause their offspring to regard their death as a blessing—you destroy the affections of our nature—you corrupt innocence—you debase youth—you ——”

He might have gone on moralising thus for ever ; but, for all the good that it did, he might as well have never said a word on the subject.

“ Come, my sons,” said the empress, cutting short her august spouse’s soliloquy, “ we shall soon see which is the best. I have a plan to put an end to this strife,” observed she, in a whisper to the emperor.

The emperor, who had a high notion of his wife’s prudence, and depended much on her opinion, like many other very great men in present as well as past times, nodded assent.

“ Now, my sons,” continued she, “ listen !”

The boys clustered round her, like grapes on the vine-stock when the vintage is nigh.

“ Go you three to the village,” she went on, patting the head of each as she spoke ; “ you Pepin, you Carl, and you Ludwig, and there get each of you a cock from the villagers. Bring them hither then without delay.”

The boys flew to the village, accompanied by their governor ; and they returned in a brief space of time with their prizes. A crowd of peasant children followed them to the palace. The emperor and empress sat in the courtyard, and the courtiers stood around in a circle.

“ Now, my children,” said the empress, as the boys, in obedience to her beck, strode into the circle, each with his chanticleer in his arms ; “ now, my children, set your birds down : place them opposite one another in fair positions, and then let them fight it out. Whichsoever of the birds beats the other, his backer shall be emperor.”

“ Be it so,” said Charlemagne, solemnly ; “ but not till my death.”

The birds fought, and the sovereigns and their court looked admiringly on the battle. Ever and anon, as the high-spirited animals strove for the victory, a shout from the crowd would break through the decorum of the imperial presence ; but, as one after another fell before the victor, the excitement of those present seemed to know no bounds. The boys participated to the fullest extent in all the emotions of the spectators ; and each felt the failure of his favourite as a death-blow to himself. The battle lasted an entire hour. At the end of the fight, two of the courageous creatures lay dead.

Ludwig’s bird had conquered. In how far this anecdote may be true or not, there is no authority for saying beyond the tradition of ages ; it is, however, the fact that Ludwig, the youngest son of Charlemagne, succeeded him in the empire ; but not to the prejudice of his elder brothers’ rights and undisputed claims, for they had died.

All traces of the pleasure palace of the mighty Charlemagne have disappeared from Kempten ; and its memory only survives in the legends of the vicinity.

LANGE-WINKEL—ST. BARTHOLOMAI.

On the other shore of the Rhine, the ancient town of Winkel stretches along the bank of the river. Winkel is undoubtedly of classic origin ; and antiquarians deduce its name from the cellars established there by the Romans (*vini cellæ*.) It is also said to have served the same purposes for Charlemagne ; and many traditions are extant of his fondness for the spot, or, to speak more correctly, of the treasures it contained. Nay, it is firmly believed that his affection survived his death ; and that, even

now, at certain seasons of the year, his spirit loves to wake from its slumber of ages, and revisit it still :

“ To linger awhile, and dream he lives once more.”

A German poet* has versified this belief with much of graceful fancy ; and an attempt at translation of it is subjoined, in which the form and spirit of the original has been preserved as much as possible.

THE SILVER BRIDGE.

On the Rhine—the green Rhine—in the soft summer night,
The vineyards lie sleeping beneath the moon's light :
But, lo ! there 's a shadow on green hill and glade,
Like the form of a king in his grandeur arrayed.

Yes, yes, 'tis the monarch that erst ruled this land ;—
It is old Charlemagne, with his sword in his hand,
And his crown on his head, and his sceptre of gold,
And the purple imperial in many a rich fold.

Long ages have fled since he lived in this life,
Whole nations have perished by time or by strife,
Since he swayed, with a power never known, from his birth.
What brings his great spirit to wander on earth ?

He hath come from his tomb that 's in Aix-la-Chapelle—
He hath come to the stream which he once loved so well—
Not to ban or to blight with his presence the scene,
But to bless the blithe vineyards by Luna's soft sheen.

The moonbeams they make a brave bridge o'er the Rhine,
From Winkel to Ingelheim brightly they shine :
Behold ! by this bridge the old monarch goes over,
And blesses the flood with the warmth of a lover.

He blesses each vineyard, on plain and on hill ;
Each village, each cottage, his blessing doth fill ;
He blesses each spot, on the shore, on the river,
Which he loved in his life—which forget, he can never.

* Emanuel Geibel, in that very valuable little volume, “ Rheinsagen von C. Simrock.” Bonn, 1837.

And then, from the home that he still loves so well,
He returns to his tomb that 's in Aix-la-Chapelle,
There to slumber in peace till the old year is over,
And the vineyards once more woo him back like a lover.

St. Bartholomai, once a flourishing village in connexion with Winkel, being also a continuation of that town, is now only denoted by a few ruinous buildings. It claims equal antiquity with its neighbour, and, in the middle ages, was a place of scarcely less importance. The famous convent known as *Die Klausse*—the cell or hermitage—once existed here ; but it has long since disappeared.

JOHANNISBERG—THE RHEIN-GAU.

“ The Throne of Bacchus ” is one of the many fond appellatives bestowed upon the famous château of Johannisberg ; and “ the Paradise ” of the same jolly god, is the name given to the Rhein-gau, of which it may be considered as the central and most celebrated point.

Johannisberg was originally a priory, founded, according to ancient chronicles, in 1009, by Ruthard, archbishop of Mayence. One-and-twenty years subsequently, it was converted into a monastery, and largely endowed, by Adalbert, his successor. In 1567, the monastery was secularised, and the brotherhood dissolved ; the one having been, in great part, burned down by Albert Markgraf of Brandenburg, in 1552 ; and the others having been dispersed in various directions. The few remains of the building spared by this fire were destroyed shortly after by the Swedes, under Gustavus Adolphus, in the “ thirty years’ war.” In 1641, the estate was sold for 30,000 florins, equivalent to very nearly 3000*l.*, to Hubert von Bleyman, arch-treasurer of the German empire : but, in 1716, his heirs and successors relinquished it, for a sufficient consideration, to the Abbey of Fulda. According to the statements of Schreiber,* “ the building then

* Rheim-Reise. Traveller’s Guide to the Rhine. London : Leigh.

arose from its ruins, and the cultivation of the vine was increased." By what means it is not within my power at present to say, the estate subsequently fell to the emperors of Austria; and, in 1816, it was presented by the late sovereign of that empire, Francis the First, to Prince Metternich.

The Rhein-Gau, of which Johannisberg, as I have already stated, may be considered the central point, is a tract long famous in the local history of the Rhine. The word Gau signifies, in the ancient Frankish dialect, a county, or principality all but entirely independent of the nominal head of the empire; and the limits of the jurisdiction denoted by that term in the present instance, extended from Lorch near Caub, to Elfeldt near Mainz, or, more strictly speaking, to Nieder Walluf. It was originally conferred on the Archbishops of Mainz by the Carlovignian monarchs as an appanage of that see; and it was the favourite abode of these prelates for many succeeding centuries. The Rhein-Gau was fortified by nature, and by art in the middle ages; and was a place of the greatest importance on the Rhine, until the occurrence of the "Servile war," which kept pace with the spread of the Reformation in the neighbourhood of this river. That terrible war soon desolated its once fertile soil, and speedily covered the land with carnage and ruin.

THE SERVILE WAR.

It is not the purpose of these pages to enter on the history of the Reformation as it affected the Rhenish people; but the horrors of the Servile war, which was one of its results, may not be passed over in total silence. In the upper districts of the Archdiocese of Mainz, a rabble rout, known by the appropriate name of the "hell-crowd," composed altogether of the peasantry of the adjacent parts, committed the most unheard-of excesses—burning and destroying churches, convents, and monasteries—murdering the inmates of both sexes—and driving the nobles, their masters, fugitives before them in every direction. The contagion soon spread itself to the lower district; and the example of the lawless mob of Speyers was emulated and exceeded by those of Mainz and its contiguous territory. In the Rhein-Gau, the atrocities committed by these misguided men in the name of religion is

almost incredible. They assembled on the *Wacholder*, the ancient place of meeting of the inhabitants of the district; and there, having compelled the Baron Brömser of Rudesheim, vicegerent for the Archbishops of Mainz, and several others of the resident nobility, to appear before them, they insisted on their subscribing a series of articles, thirty-one in number, reasonable in themselves, but, as it subsequently appeared, only put forward as a cloak to cover future excesses of a most frightful character.

Original documents, detailing these excesses, are still in existence; in which it may be seen how ruthless were the rebels, and how uniformly cruel the operation of their wild law. "We cry to you," writes the abbess of Gottesthal convent to the Baron of Greifenklau; "we cry to you for aid, with a sorrowful heart, in the deepest dool, for the evils we have suffered at the hands of those wicked men, who rob and plunder us as they list, and threaten our lives if we offer any resistance or objection to them." And the Baron Frederic von Greifenklau, in another letter or rescript, of the date 5th May, 1525, draws a picture more terrible in its details, but still fully confirmatory of the statement of the Abbess of Gottesthal. A period, however, was put to their ravages, by the energy of the Archbishop of Mainz, and the military skill of his general, George Truchsess von Waldburg; but it was a very long time, indeed, until the Rhein-Gau recovered its former peace and prosperity.

OESTRICH.

Further onwards, still ascending the river, stands, on the same side as Johannisberg, the town of Oestrich. Adjacent to this spot stood, some time since,—not very long ago,—the celebrated convent of Gottesthal, alluded to in the preceding article, but not a vestige of which now exists to point out its former site. It is to the olden times of this convent that the following appalling legend relates, the noble knight referred to in it, being then the head of one of the ancient families in the neighbourhood.

THE NUN.

In Gottesthal, upon a time,
A young and noble knight
Did love a holy cloistered nun,
In bolt and bars' despite.
Full oft he told her of his pangs ;
And, lowly kneeling, swore
To free her from her prison's fangs
And love her evermore.

" I swear it by this statue sweet
Of Christ's own mother dear !
I swear it by the blessed babe
That her fond arms do bear !
To thee, Belinda, is my heart
Devote whilst I have breath :
May all my hopes of Heaven depart,
If 't be not till the death !"

Alas ! what credits not fair maid,
Confined within a cell ?
All sacred duties she forgot ;
And heaven full soon, and hell.
She, that before the angel host,
Gave her to God away ;
The bride of Christ, for ever lost,
Became that bad man's prey.

Thenceforth, as men are ever wont,
Hourly his heart grew cool ;
To her own thoughts, so sorrowful,
He left her, poor, fond fool ;
Forgot his first feigned tenderness,
And all that erst he sware,
And fled far off in gala-dress,
To feast his eyes elsewhere ;

And other women wooed he then,
In lustre-lighted halls ;
And flattered them and followed them,
At banquets and at balls.
And of his fair nun's favours all
He boasted far and wide ;
Each kiss, each glance, that did befall,
And many a joy beside.

The nun, whose fond but wretched heart
Felt madness' wildest mood,
With red rage burned, " to kill, kill, kill,"
Her thought—her dream was blood.
She bribed a band of ruffians rude,
A murd'rous horde were they,
Her lover's black ingratitude
With dreadful death to pay.

They sought and slew him ; many a blade
In his black heart was buried ;
And his dark soul, in sulphur-reek,
To hell's drear regions hurried.
Wild wailed it on its downward way,
While watched it fiends so fell ;
And then his gory corse laid they
With worms for aye to dwell.

When night's shades fell, the nun swift sped
Unto the village church,
And dragged her dripping lover's corse
Without into the porch,
Then tore his base heart from its breast ;
And then his scorn to pay,
Down flung it with a laugh unblest,
And trode it into clay.

Since then long time hath passed ; but still,
Old legends say that she
Till cock-crow tarries in that aisle,
Aye shrieking fearfully.

And that, when tolls the midnight bell,
She seeks his monument ;
And from it brings, with looks so fell,
A heart with blood besprent.

Her hollow, hideous eyes then flash
A fire full fierce but pale ;
Like brimstone flame they glint and gleam,
Thorough her thick white veil.
Then on that mangled heart these eyes
She sets with horrid mirth ;
Then flings it thrice towards the skies,
Then casts it on the earth ;

And then those awful orbs she rolls,
Which gleam with hell's own fire ;
And shakes her veil while blood-gouts fall,
Then treads that heart to mire.
Then dreary death-lights sad illumine
The chapel windows all ;
The village warder, in the gloom,
These sights full oft appal.

INGELHEIM.

Ingelheim, the favourite residence of Charlemagne, has, of course, a greater number of traditions connected with it than, perhaps, any other single point on the Rhine. Of these the most prominent and interesting are here offered to the reader. There is more of fable in the history of this monarch than is to be met with in that of almost any other sovereign of his age ; but, like all fable, it has probably some slight foundation in fact. It is not pretended to give the biography of that illustrious prince in these pages ; but the traditions associated with his name, in the minds of the people of this district, may not be omitted in a work like this. An ancient and most amusing legend is that which succeeds :—

THE EMPEROR AND THE ROBBER.

Ingelheim, or Engelheim, that is to say, the "Angel's Home," is stated in one of the oldest rhymed chronicles extant,* to have taken its name from the following singular tradition. The chronicler assures his readers that the tale, which he dignifies, be it said *en passant*, with the title of a history,† is but a poetical version of absolute facts, which relate to the conspiracy of a certain Henderich, in the poem styled Eggerich, and a large body of the Austrasian nobility and warriors, against Charlemagne their sovereign; and the subsequent defeat and death of that chief and the principal conspirators, and the banishment of those of minor importance. The original he purports to have found in the work of Alberich, a Frankish monk, compiled in the lifetime of that magnificent monarch‡—a work which is now unknown to the learned, except by name and indirect allusion; being supposed to have perished in one of the many subsequent mutations of the Germanic empire.

Thus runs the tale.

It was on a night when Charlemagne held court in his proud palace at Ingelheim, on the Rhine, that he laid him on his couch and slept. As he slept he had a celestial vision: he was aware of the presence of an angel from heaven, who, sailing downwards on his broad, bright pinions, lighted incontinent at his bedside.

"Karl," spake the messenger of God, in tones like the music of a wind-harp through a summer grove, "arise! Arise, and equip thee, and arm; and go forth and steal! It is the will of the Lord that thou go forth of thy palace; yea, this very night, and steal some of thy neighbour's goods! Tarry not to obey this command, or life and throne may not long abide with thee. Thus says the Omnipotent."

The angel again waved his pinions, and was soon lost in a rosy-coloured mass of light.

* *Horæ Belgicæ*. Edit. Hoffmann von Fallersleben, 4te Theile.

† "Historie van Koninkende van Elegast." *Horæ Belg.* *ibid.* It is written in the ancient poetic dialect of the Netherlands; or, in other words, in old *plaat* or Low-Dutch; and the present tale is a very close translation of it into plain prose.

‡ "Chronikon," von Alberich, A.D. 788.

Charlemagne wist not what to do. He rubbed his eyes to ascertain if he was awake ; and when he found that he was so, he fancied that it was all but an idle dream.

“It was a pleasant one at all events,” thought he ; “and the angel was surely an angel from heaven ;—that I know by the brightness and beauty of his broad brilliant wings :—but, pleasant though it was, I would fain sleep and dream it no more.”

With this thought he turned him on the other side, in his couch, and slept again in a moment. His lids, however, were scarcely closed, when the heavenly visitant was again visible to his mind’s eye ; but the voice which sounded before like the breath of summer on an Eolian instrument, now rung in the sleeping monarch’s ear like a harp rudely crashed by a hasty or unskilful hand ; and the large, beautiful, blue eyes, which heretofore beamed upon him all benignancy and love, now looked sternly, and seemed to reproach him with his incredulity, or his sloth.

“Karl,” said the angel solemnly, “arise ! God, the Lord of heaven and earth commands it. Go forth and steal ere the star of night wanes in yonder sky, or you are lost past redemption. Up and away ; and tarry not. It is the will of the Lord !”

Again the celestial vision faded from his eyes ; and he was once more awake, and sitting upright in his bed, His mind was much troubled by what he had heard and seen.

“God help me !” spake the monarch, with a deep-drawn sigh. “What shall I do ? What means all this ? Is it that a night-mare has lain on my breast ? or, mayhap, some fiend that has taken this shape of light, wishes to tempt me. What shall I do ? God guide me !”

He was silent for some minutes, absorbed in meditation.

“Heavenly powers,” he resumed, “why should I steal ? What need have I of my neighbour’s goods ? And saith not God’s law, ‘thou shalt not steal ?’”

Again was he wrapped in thought for a time.

“Yet,” he pursued, “that was truly a messenger of heaven ; no fiend ever looked so beautiful ! But, oh God ! to steal !”——

He sighed, as though he would yield up his spirit at the thought.

“—— To steal !” he continued. “What should I steal for ? What have I to wish for in this world ? Am I not as rich

as rich can be? No man on the face of God's earth, be he Kaiser, be he king, or be he count, hath half so much as I have! And are not the princes of the land my tributaries and my servants? My realm is so wide that it nowhere hath its like: for doth it not extend from Cologne on the Rhine to Rome on the Tiber? from the wild and distant banks of the Danube in the East, to the shores of the troubled and unknown ocean in the West? and are not Galicia and the Iberian land mine own, won with my good sword, and kept by my wisdom and power? Does not all this broad surface call me sovereign; and am I not lord and master of the properties as well as the lives of all those who dwell on it? Why then should I steal? And wherefore should God will it so? I would not willingly disobey the commands of my Maker; but I cannot bring myself to believe that he would cover my gray hairs with shame, and convert my glory into disgrace, by ordering me, in this my old age, to turn thief."

He had scarce spoken the words, when, weary with thought and anxiety, or, perhaps, affected by the operation of a supernal influence, a deep slumber sealed his eyes once more; and once more, for the third time, the angel of the Lord stood before him. The aspect of the celestial ambassador was now so beautifully severe, that the monarch could not bear to look on it; and the tones of his voice, musical and melodious still, jarred on his sense of hearing like the notes of an untuned instrument, played by an unskilful performer.

"Karl," he spake, "why tarry? Wouldst thou disobey the Omnipotent, who holds kingdoms and empires in the hollow of his hand? Arise, arm, and forth to steal! Once more I tell thee that thou art lost for ever—life and land, body and soul—if yon sheeny, crescent moon kiss the western horizon ere thou art up and away in obedience to the will of the Lord! Do as thou listeth. Thou knowest thy fate. A thief and all: nothing if not. This the last time I shall warn thee. Farewell!"

The angel disappeared: the amber-gold and roseate clouds above opened to receive him; Charlemagne caught through the aperture a glimpse of heaven; and he heard the voices of the blessed singing aloud in eternal chorus the song of the Lamb, "Hosannah in the highest!"

"God's will be done!" exclaimed the monarch sighing; for

he was still unhappy, though he no longer doubted or disbelieved. "God's will be done! What is to be must be. And I will go forth and steal, as he has commanded, even though I should be taken like a thief in the act, and meet a thief's end—to be hanged by the neck like a dog. Come what will, shame or sorrow, I will forth."

He sprang from his couch as he spake the words, and set about to dress himself.

"Well! well!" he soliloquized, as he went on, "it can't be helped! But God, who knows all things, knows full well that, rather than do this disgraceful act of my own accord, I would willingly resign into his hands all that which he has bestowed upon me: cities and castles, and land and water, and all that therein live; and, taking shield and spear in my hand, exist on the chances he might send in fair adventure. That I would! and that would be my fondest wish in preference. But he has commanded it, and I must not disobey, for fear I should forfeit his favour. His will be done!"

He had now completed his equipment; and was armed back and breast, head and heel. Cuirass and helm, cuisses, and greaves, and gauntlets were on; it only remained to take his sword and *couteau de chasse*, his spear and his shield, all of which were every night laid on his bed beside him;—and, then to saddle his horse, and set forth on his reluctant mission.

"Would to God I had never been born!" he murmured, as he stole forth his chamber; "or that it had never come to this. But there is no remedy for it now."

He passed by his pages as they lay at the outer door of his apartment dead asleep; and he wondered that he woke them not, as he stepped over them in his mailed suit, which clanked at every motion, sufficient to disturb any ordinary sleeper. The porters in the hall of the palace slept also; and the warders at the gates, as well as the centinels on the towers, were torpid as dead men—so deep was their repose.

"It is wonderful!" said he to himself. "The hand of God is here."

He proceeded to the stable where his best horses were kept, and approached the stall of his favourite steed unobserved. The grooms were all asleep; yea, the very horses slept likewise; all

except his favourite, who whinnied and neighed at his approach ; but in so low a strain as not to awaken the others.

“God help me !” sighed he once more, as he mounted his caparisoned steed and rode forth. “God help me ! I would give seven of the fairest castles that strew the shores of yon lordly river, and I were hence without being seen. What will those knights and nobles I leave sleeping within this proud palace say, if I am discovered going out alone in the dead of the night, like a thief in the darkness ? God help me ! for I am a helpless man.”

Through court-yard and portal passed he unobserved, for the palace seemed like the enchanted city in the Eastern tale—petrified. All within it slept like the dead. The gates opened to his touch ; the portcullis sprang up at his appearance ; the bridge lowered itself as if by magic at his approach. Unseen, unheard, and unnoticed of aught living, he stood without the precincts of the imperial residence—“the world before him.”

And so he rode forth, with a heavy heart, on his thief’s errand that blessed night.

It was one of those lovely, late autumn nights, which seem to fall with such fondness on the beautiful banks of the Rhine. The sheeny crescent moon hung its lamp low in the western sky—lighting the concave of heaven as twilight does the “long-drawn aisles and fretted roofs” of a cathedral—the stars shone out in twinkling radiance, vivifying by their apparent activity all around—the broad bright river flowed onwards on its glorious course, dispensing, even in the solitude of the night, its blessings on both shores—the sombre pine-forests, which then covered the mountain tops, slept in the density of their own shadow—and the vine-covered hill-sides laughed out in all the glow of an abundant vintage, “purple and gushing.” The scene was one which no land that lies beneath the sun could surpass in sheer loveliness—and which few on the wide earth could equal or even approach. And in this scene, and under that sky, stood the mighty Emperor of the West—the ruler of the European world—a reluctant wanderer for one of the worst of purposes—robbery.

“God help me !” he exclaimed, wringing his hands in an

agony of grief and shame, and bitterness of spirit. "God help me! Where shall I go?"

He threw the reins on the neck of his noble steed; and, then raising his hands to heaven, he prayed aloud.

"Oh, Saviour of man! who came on earth to redeem our sinful souls, be thou my guide and my comforter in this time of trial and distress, and make thy mercies manifest."

Even as he spake, his steed turned about to the thick, dark, pine-forest which stretched along the rear of the palace of Ingelheim, towards the shores of the Nahe; and the pious monarch, looking on the circumstance as a direct interposition of Providence, pursued without delay the path thus pointed out to him.

On he rode without interruption, and was shortly buried in the shadows of the gloomy wood. He encountered no one on his way; and the expectation of meeting a fellow-creature was speedily lost in deep meditation on the matter of his journey. But as he proceeded he was followed, unawares, by a mounted man, who came by a cross-path from the recesses of the forest; and ere the emperor heard or saw aught to indicate the presence of a companion, a knight, armed to the teeth, had reined up within a few paces of him, under cover of a clump of trees.

"God help me!" soliloquized the sorely perplexed monarch,—this was his usual exclamation when in trouble or distress. "God help me! No man could be harder on thieves than I have been—no one could punish them more severely than I have done—and yet here I am, bound to steal myself—a thief in intention, shortly to be a thief in deed. God help me!"

His stalwart steed stepped out freely as he spoke, and neighed as if for joy of his burden, or with pleasure to breathe the free air of heaven. To the monarch it seemed even as the voice of reproach; for many and many a time had that noble animal borne him onwards to victory.

"It is a dreary life after all," he pursued, still soliloquizing as he proceeded. "A dreary, desolate, dangerous life—that of a thief or a robber—who lives by what he can, and whose life is one weary, inglorious adventure. God help us! Get what they may they have no enjoyment of it, for they are in a state of perpetual fear and dread of death; and then when we catch

them, we either slay them at once, without giving them a moment to repent of their misdeeds; or hang them like dogs; or smite off their heads to fix on our gates; or gibbet them in the cross-roads of the country. God help us! Never more, as long as I live and reign, will I take man's life for small offence against his neighbour's property."

The strange rider, still unseen, followed the unconscious monarch; who thus went on in converse with his own spirit, unheard though not unnoticed.

"There is that poor fellow, Elbegast*—God help me!—I have done him much wrong. For a trifling thing I have driven him forth from house and home; I have deprived him of land and of fee; and I have compelled him to become an outcast and, ah me! a robber. He is now obliged to risk his life for every mouthful he eats, and he must have a heavy heart besides; for his followers, his knights and his squires, are all in the same plight through their love of him. I wonder, would my knights and nobles do as much for me were I in the same wretched condition? And yet I have laid the ban of the empire on whoso shelters or gives him, or his, succour; and made it the loss of feof and estate, castle and land, to afford him or them either. God help him! He has now no home but the wilderness; no roof but the greenwood tree; no covering but the canopy of heaven. Alas! alas! can I condemn him if he despoil his neighbour, who hath himself been so despoiled of all! And yet there is a nobleness in his bad actions which beseems not the degraded condition he is compelled to. He plunders not the poor; nay, he helps them with his ill-got gains; he despoils not the pilgrim of the offerings which he bears to some holy shrine, but often enriches him with offerings of greater value; he wars not with the merchant or the wayfarer—on the contrary, he gives the one

* Elbegast—in the "Minne-sänge" of Frauenlob, Alegast—often also known as Elegast, was, according to tradition, one of the most cunning, sleight-of-hand thieves in existence. It is related of him that he would steal the eggs from under the brooding bird without her knowledge; and perform many other professional feats of a similar character. In some modern versions of the legend he is represented as a dwarf (vide Simrock's "Rheinsagen"); and his first acquaintance with Charlemagne, is made to commence by his stripping the unconscious monarch of arms and armour, even while on this predatory excursion.

protection, and to the other he affords aid and assistance on his journey. But wo to the bishop, or the abbot, or the monk, or the priest that crosses his path ! He pays no respect to their canonicals, or their shaven crowns : but flings them from horse and mule, and strips them of all they carry—gold, and silver, and garments, and all. Oh, but he is a foe to churchmen ; who, I must say it, have never been friends to him. Yet, wicked though he be, God help me ! I would that I had him here as my companion this night."

As he spake, the stranger was beside him.

The monarch, though stout of heart beyond all men of his time, was somewhat startled by the appearance of his new associate. It was not, however, without reason that he felt fear ; for the stranger was cased from head to heel in armour of a raven-black ;—black plumes nodding heavily from his helmet, like the pinions of a dark night-bud ; and the strong, large-boned steed he bestrode was also black as a coal.

"Can it be the prince of darkness ?" thought Charlemagne, as he crossed himself, and muttered a pater and ave.

The stranger spake not ; but still rode on beside the emperor.

"God help me !" continued the monarch, sorely puzzled, "God help me ! Here is an adventure—to hold fellowship with the fiend !"

He spurred his steed to get rid of his companion ; but the animal of the black rider was equally powerful and well-paced as his own ; and they were still abreast of each other after a hard ride of half an hour.

"Well, well," exclaimed Charlemagne, "be it for weal or be it for woe, I must through with it. God help me ! but I am a miserable man this blessed night."

So saying he reined up his horse, on a sudden, until he almost fell on his haunches ; then half-wheeling him round, with a movement equally sudden, he placed himself in front of the black rider. His opponent, by a quick jerk of the bridle, brought his horse to bear on the front of his adversary, in a position which allowed the latter no advantage, thereby shewing himself a most skilful horseman.

"Man or devil," cried the emperor, "stand ! You go not

hence until I know your name, and how you call your father — whither go you, and what is your errand ?”

“ It boots not to inquire,” spake the dusky stranger, for the first time, in the hearing of the monarch ; “ for I will not answer your questions.”

“ Well then, draw !” cried his imperial opponent. “ Prove thyself the man thou seemest, or the fiend that thou mayst be. Draw !”

The emperor had no occasion to repeat the challenge ; for the word had scarce passed his lips when the broad, bright, trenchant blade of the stranger, glittered in the moonshine. Their first onset, however, was a deadly tilt with spears ; in which neither was injured : though their weapons were splintered and broken by the force of the shock like dried bulrushes. They then alighted from their horses, and began with their swords. Never before were the feathered inhabitants of this thick forest witness to such an encounter. Charlemagne fought with that bravery which won him the reputation of the best swordsman in his own broad empire ; but the black rider shewed that he was by no means his inferior in the art of fence. Many and deep were the indentations in the harness of both ; and the frequent rills of blood which trickled abundantly from all parts of their bodies exposed to the shower of blows, attested the number and nature of the wounds inflicted. The fight lasted long ; but the combatants were as fierce at the end as at the onset.

“ Ha !” thought the monarch, as he rested a moment on his sword to draw breath ; “ by the body of God ! but this is the stoutest knave I have ever encountered. He hath wellnigh mauled me into a mummy.”

“ He is a stark wight,” said the black stranger, to himself, as he availed him of the tacit truce for the same purpose. “ Such strokes I never felt. He has a hand as heavy as a sledge-hammer.”

The combat was again resumed ; and again all was done and performed that strength, skill, and agility could effect. The blows fell like rain, and cleft where they fell into bloody chasms ; the sparks flew from the collision of weapons like fire from a flint ; the silent forest was awakened with the succession of crashes quick, thick, and heavy, as thunder-claps in the troubled

sky; and the frightened birds fled away screaming, or soaring high in air, or wheeling astounded around, mixed their plaintive cries, and terrified shrieks, with the sound of strife and slaughter.

"This will never do," said the emperor. "It must not be told that I fought so long without to conquer."

As he spoke he struck at his adversary, who received the blow on his uplifted brand. But such was the temper of the monarch's weapon, and such the force of the blow, that the sword which received it was cut sheer through, as though it were only a willow wand; the severed portion penetrating several feet into the ground whereon it fell.

"You have won," cried the black rider. "Finish. My life is yours!"

"By the body of God!" quoth Charlemagne, "but you are a stout fellow to fight with."

"My life is yours," were the only words the discomfited warrior spake; "take it an ye will."

"Nay, nay," resumed the good-humoured monarch, "that may not be. What boots your life to me?"

"It is now worth nought," said his opponent sadly. "I am a beaten man."

"Bah! bah!" quickly interposed Charlemagne; "away with melancholy. Your life is your own. And now, tell me who you are, whither you go, and what is your business in the forest this night?"

The stranger paused as if to consider; but it was only for a moment. The next instant he drew himself up to his full height, and said—

"I am Elbegast!"

Charlemagne was astounded; surprise and joy overpowered him: he was now to meet the accomplishment of his wish.

"Would you more?" continued the outlaw. "My story is a long one, not soon told, or pleasant to listen to. I was once rich and noble; I am now an outcast, robbed of my lands and inheritance by ——"

"Enough, enough," cried the monarch. "But say, where are your companions? Fame speaks of your followers as a powerful force."

"We are twelve," announced Elbegart, "and no more; but fame sticks not at falsehood."

"Proceed," quoth Charlemagne.

"I was forth on a foray this night," he continued; "but, meeting you, I thought to rid myself of a spy. The emperor, God bless him, is no friend of mine; and I wist not but you were his emissary. Now you know all."

"Well met, my friend," spake the emperor; "well met, and happily too. I am bound on the same business."

"Your name?" asked Elbegast.

"Nay, that is too much to ask of your victor," replied Charlemagne; "but believe yourself safe with me. You shall know all about it in due time."

"Be it as you wish," sighed the sorrowful robber. "I am at your feet."

And now," continued the emperor, "where shall we go?—for you must bear me company. I am wont to rob every one that comes in my way, rich and poor, well or ill: nought is sacred with me—the shrine in the church, or the coffer of the miser. I heed no complaints; I know no sympathy; I have no respect for persons. So let us go somewhere, for I am hard up: you shall have the half."

Elbegast mused awhile, and did not reply to this proposition.

"Ha!" again broke forth the monarch, "a lucky thought! a lucky thought! I have it! I have it! We shall rob the emperor's treasury together. I know something of the way."

"Friend," spake his companion solemnly, after a brief pause; "I have never done wrong to the emperor yet, and I shall not do so now. Deal as you will with me. I touch not his treasury."

"Oh, very well," said Charlemagne; "be it so. I am not particularly anxious about it. But you shall find some substitute for it; as money I must have this night, something of equal value, by robbery, and by no other means. Wot ye of any other prey?"

"Not two hours' ride from hence," said the outlaw, "stands the strong castle of Eggerich von Eggermond, who married the emperor's sister, and acquired much treasure from the favour of his brother-in-law. Let us thither."

Charlemagne looked as if he hesitated to accede to this proposal; but it was only done to hear what his companion should say.

“He is not fit to live!” pursued Elbegast, indignantly. “He is one from whom it would be no sin to take all he had—ay, even his very breath. It is a shame and a disgrace that he should be suffered to thrive and prosper, while better men are oppressed. Does he not persecute the poor, and plunder the wretched of their last mouthful? Has he not betrayed many innocent men to undeserved death? And would he not even deprive the emperor of life and of power if he could? I know him well; and a greater villain never cursed the earth he dwells on. That is the proper prey for men like you and me. Let us thither. The little that we can take from the riches he has had heaped on him by the unthinking bounty of his sovereign, will not be missed; nor, if it be, will its loss be felt. Let us thither!”

“Be it even as you say,” quoth Charlemagne.

And so they bestrode their steeds, and rode forward together for the castle of Eggerich von Eggermond.

The thin, sheeny, crescent moon now hung her lamp very low in the west; indeed it was the third hour past midnight when Charlemagne and Elbegast arrived at their destination. They alighted at the outer edge of the broad demesne that spread around the castle; and having there tied their horses to a tree in the shadow of the forest, proceeded to the edifice itself by the most direct path. As they crossed the fields which led to it, the emperor saw a plough standing in the furrow which it had turned up in the day; and approaching it, he wrenched off the iron share, and bore it in his hand onwards.

“This will do capitally,” said he to his companion; “nothing can be better to break a hole in a wall!”

Elbegast shrugged his shoulders, and made no reply; but he thought to himself that it was a curious tool to rob with.

“Whoso goes on such an errand as ours,” pursued the monarch, “must have proper means. The good workman requires good tools.”

Again did his companion shrug his shoulders, and say no-

thing ; but he still thought the tool much more curious than useful.

They had now reached the castle itself. It was a wonder of beauty in its way, and a miracle for strength all the empire over. They halted in the rear of the building to screen themselves from prying eyes.

"Now," said Elbegast, speaking for the first time during the journey, "here we are. Let us begin. Go you on. I shall follow your guidance. For, should any evil befall us in the attempt we are about to make, I would fain have it said that I was not the cause of it."

"Nay, nay," replied the emperor good-humouredly, "on you be it to make a beginning. I wist not the way of the place. And, besides, friend Elbegast, you ken that it was on your knowledge that I came hither. So set about the work ; for, God help me ! I wot not how we may find entrance."

But Elbegast shewed no immediate signs of compliance. He had thought within himself, that he would ascertain by experiment whether his conqueror was as expert in stealing, as he was at sword-play ; and he, therefore, determined to put his boasted capacity to the trial in the one as he had done in the other. There might have been a particle of pride mixed up with this resolution also ; for even robbers are not inaccessible to the influence of that universal passion, more than men who direct their course by honourable means to great, and noble, and praiseworthy ends.

"Well, then," he spake, after a pause, as though he had been thinking on the proposition of the emperor ; "well, then, let us make an opening in the wall."

"Have at it," quoth the monarch.

And to it they went.

Elbegast drew forth an instrument peculiarly fitted for the purpose of boring with the least possible noise—an instrument of immense power, and of great strength. Charlemagne produced his ploughshare. They set to work with much apparent activity on the part of the former ; with unfeigned earnestness on that of the latter. But the monarch found that he could make no impression on the thick stone wall to which he applied himself ; while the robber laughed in his sleeve all the time at the toil, and trouble, and sweat, which the painful and fruitless labour cost him.

“ Well, well, brother,” spake he, laughing so lowly as not to be heard ; “ that is not the best tool in the world, after all said and done, to cut through a castle-wall, ten feet thick.”

“ Methinks so,” replied the emperor drily ; “ yet have I done greater things before now with less worthy weapons.”

“ Be it so, brother,” observed Elbegast. “ I but spake to satisfy you of its uselessness in the present case. But the business must be done. So throw it aside for a moment, and let us see what I can do in the matter.”

With a degree of dexterity and strength, which shewed at the same time his skill and his power of body, the robber set himself at once to work ; and, to the great surprise of his companion, a wide chasm was agape in the wall, ere he had well recovered himself from the exhaustion produced by his own profitless toil on the same place for the same purpose. It was wide enough to admit any man, however large his dimensions.

“ And now, brother,” said Elbegast, “ as you have insisted on it—and as your will is my law for the time—I shall enter here ; and here shall you stay to receive and secure all that I may succeed in bringing out with me.”

This arrangement, however, did not altogether satisfy the monarch ; for he magnanimously thought that he should not, even in such an undertaking, let another run all the risk, while he derived an equal share of the advantages arising from it. And he therefore spake his thoughts in his own free fashion to the robber. But the robber would hear nothing of it ; for he, too, was as magnanimous in his way as the emperor ; and it was no part of his practice to permit the inexperienced to encounter any danger to which they did not appear fully competent. And so he said to his companion :

“ Nay, nay, it must not be ; for your ignorance of the intricacies of this castle would wholly destroy our plan. Stay here till I come back to you. You shall not lose any opportunity of distinguishing yourself which can be fairly afforded you.”

So the monarch was fain to rest content with this arrangement ; and he stayed without the castle-wall accordingly.

Elbegast entered the edifice through the aperture which he had made ; and immediately that he was within it, he drew from his pocket a small dried herb, and placing it in his mouth, began to

chew it rapidly. Now, the property of this herb was to make him who did as the robber had done with it, cognisant of the language of the inferior animals, and acquainted with their conversation; and it was thus very useful to him in many respects, as by its means he acquired much additional information in furtherance of his projects. The place he entered at was the stable; and as he stood within it, he heard an old cock, who roosted in a corner, cry out, in his own crowing way, to a large Alpine mastiff who lay crouched beneath his perch:

"Gossip, what do ye think? The emperor is at hand!"

To which the hound barked in reply:

"I know it. Let me sleep."

Elbegast was in sore trouble when he heard this news; and he would, therefore, go no further. So he even returned to the aperture, and appeared before the monarch as one amazed.

"Ho! ho!" quoth the latter, "quick work, comrade! quick work! What hast got?"

"Nay, brother," replied the robber, "I had not the heart even to begin."

And so he told Charlemagne all that he had heard.

"Pooh! pooh!" cried the emperor; "a story of a cock and a dog; 't is as good as the story of a cock and a bull. Ha! ha! ha!" And he laughed immoderately as he spoke.

"Nay, brother," replied Elbegast, rather piqued, "an ye believe me not, try it yourself. Here is the 'herb o' grace.'"

The merry monarch took the herb, and used it as the robber had done; and, true enough, he heard the cock again address his neighbour the mastiff:

"Gossip, wot ye that the emperor is at hand?"

"Yea," growled the drowsy hound. "Let me sleep."

"Wot ye now, how near?" pursued the watchful bird.

"Nay," again growled the hound, "I know not."

"Nor I neither," crowed the cock. "Would that I did: I would give him a royal salute."

The emperor returned to his companion.

"Well," inquired the robber, "are ye satisfied? I'll be hanged by the neck if the emperor is not at hand."

"Nonsense," replied the latter, evading the question; "does your heart fail ye?"

“Nay, never shall that be said of Elbegast,” exclaimed he. “Give me the herb. I go.”

The emperor fumbled in his mouth, and fumbled in his bosom, for the wondrous herb; but find it anywhere he could not.

“How’s this?” he ejaculated; “I had it but now. Can it be that I have lost it? Yet I held it only this moment between my teeth.”

On which the robber laughed outright, and spake:

“Nay, nay, brother, an ye be the thief ye tell me of, it’s a matter of sheer miracle to me that ye have not been caught long since. I stole it from you—ay, from your very mouth—just to try your skill once more.”

And Charlemagne laughed also; for he dearly loved a good joke, even though practised at his own expense.

“So now,” resumed Elbegast, “in God’s name let’s begin business.”

“Be it so, brother,” said the monarch.

They separated once more.

Elbegast quickly re-entered the aperture; and, after a short absence, returned with as much gold and silver as he could carry in a large sack. So dexterous and rapid had he been, that the monarch scarcely missed him from his side, when he was again in his presence loaded with booty.

“Quick work, comrade,” said Charlemagne jocosely: “methinks you rival Mercury.”

“Who is Mercury?” asked the robber. “Is he in our line? I don’t remember the name! But mayhap he is an Italian or Greek, or other outlandish fellow?”

“He is the prince of thieves, all the world over,” replied the laughing monarch; “and you are his rival.”

The delighted robber shook him cordially by the hand; and then greatly extolled his judgment and discrimination.

“And now,” quoth the emperor, “let us be jogging. We have as much as we may conveniently carry.”

“Nay, nay,” said Elbegast, “an it be your will, I would fain enter here once more.”

Charlemagne looked inquiry; and the robber proceeded.

“Within the chamber where sleeps Eggerich von Egger-

monde and his excellent wife—the emperor's sister—there stands the noblest caparison for a steed in the known world. It is a saddle and housing, with bit and bridle to boot, all of the bright red gold. That would I have this night ere we go."

"And why that?" asked the emperor. "Have we not enough already?"

"Because it is hung all over with a hundred sweet bells, and makes beautiful music with every breathing of the wind. I would fain try my skill on it; and willingly will I peril my life to obtain that prize."

"A wilful man will have his way," quoth the monarch, good humouredly. "Even be it as ye list."

Once more they parted—the robber re-entering the aperture for the third time.

Slowly, and softly, and cautiously as a cat, he crept on through the stalls of the stable; and passed so stealthily beneath the horses' bellies, that they never were disturbed. In the same manner he obtained an entrance to the sleeping chamber of the lord of the castle and his lovely spouse, and stood close by the object of his desires, unnoticed and unheard. He reached forth his hand to remove it from the peg on which it hung; but, by some miscalculation, he lost his balance and fell against it. All the bells rung so violently, that Eggerich von Eggermonde sprung up in his bed, to the great terror of his tender wife.

"What, ho!" he cried, in a fierce, loud voice; "who handles yon harness? My sword! my sword!"

But Elbegast had retreated the instant he recovered himself; and, closely concealed beneath a manger, he answered not.

"Nay, dearest husband," said the lovely ladye, "it was nought but the sighing of the wind; or mayhap a nightmare that lay on thy breast and caused thee to have a troubled sleep."

Eggerich von Eggermonde made an impatient gesture; but spake not a word in reply.

"But no," continued she, "it is neither, now that I bethink me. It is one of those terrific dreams that spring from a disturbed mind. Of late I have not failed to notice thee, my husband; and meseems that something of more than usual weight hangs heavy on thy heart. Wilt not tell thine own poor wife? —"

Elbegast, who heard these words, having returned to the chamber, stole closer to the bed, and pricked up his ears to gather all he could of the conversation.

“—— It is now three days and three nights since you have eaten or slept sound,” she went on; “surely, surely you have some cause for it. I’ll lay my life on it but there is that in thy mind of much moment. Nay,” she spake, caressing him fondly the while, “you will not surely conceal it from me?”

“The old song is right,” thought the robber, as he witnessed the young wife’s various allurements to obtain her husband’s secret:

“Woman’s wit is manifold,
Be she young, or be she old.”

“There is no resisting these entreaties and these caresses,” said he to himself. “It will out, whatever it be.”

And he was right. For, to the horror and surprise of both, —his wife to whom he communicated it, and Elbegast, his unsuspected auditor,—Eggerich related how he had conspired with twelve others, whose names he told over, against the emperor, his life and his dignity: and how the conspiracy, being then fully ripe, they were, the next morning, to proceed by different paths to Ingelheim, and, under the guise of peace, there to execute their treasonable purpose.

“Before the noon of the coming day,” he concluded, “Char-
emagne shall be no more; and his wide empire shall be divided amongst us.”

“Ho! ho!” thought the thief; “that is your secret? — is it?”

“Murder my own dear brother!” exclaimed the almost petrified ladye. “Murder your sovereign—your benefactor—your friend! Rather would I see you hung by the neck from a gibbet, than that my dear, dear brother should die at your hands! Oh, my husband, I warn you against the deed. It cannot prosper—it shall not, even though I betray ye myself!”

“Peace, woman!” shouted the brutal assassin. “Take that for thy reward, and be silent!”

So saying, he smote her on the fair face in such sort, that the red blood gushed forth from her mouth and nostrils, and she fell senseless in the bed. Elbegast’s heart rose within him, as he

witnessed this cruel and unmanly act ; but as he was himself quite in the toils, he could not then avenge it on the monster. Crawling, however, closer to the side of the couch on which that lovely lady lay, he held out his glove to receive the blood, as it flowed copiously from her overhanging head.

"This," he thought to himself, "will be my proof to the emperor ; for save him I will, if God permits me."

In a short time the wretched assassin closed his eyes, in the uneasy slumber of guilt, and the gentle lady slept also ; but hers was the sleep of suffering innocence. Elbegast availed himself of the opportunity ;—seized the saddle, and also the sword of the sleeper ;—and succeeded in reaching the aperture.

The emperor, tired of waiting inactive so long in the cold, greeted his companion rather roughly when he appeared.

"How now ?" quoth he. "Why is this ? Am I a man to be kept in waiting by you ? By the body of God ! it may not be ! My father's son will not endure it !"

"Nay, brother," interposed the robber, deprecatingly, "hear me in that which I have to say ; for it is of much moment to greater than you or me."

And he proceeded to state to the monarch all he had heard, and seen, and witnessed.

"God be thanked !" thought his imperial listener. "I now see why it was that the angel was so imperative with me. Honour, and glory, and praise unto Him that liveth for ever ; for he has watched over the life of his humblest servant this blessed night."

"So now, brother," concluded Elbegast, "here is the saddle—you have the treasure ; ride away, an ye will, or wait here for me ; for I shall return to the chamber of Eggerich von Eggermonde, and strike him dead as he sleeps. I shall hew off the traitor's head with his own sword ; or with thy trusty dagger let out the life-stream from his black heart. Though the emperor served me but sorrily, I love him still, and shall love him while I live, whatever betides me."

He made to re-gain the aperture ; but Charlemagne stood between him and the entrance."

"Are you mad, comrade ?" asked the monarch. "Would you peril our lives to save that of the sovereign ? What is he

to us? Are we not outlaws? Nay, nay, it must not be. If the emperor is to die, he will die; and even so let him. What boots it to you or to me to save him? No! no! it may not be!"

This he said, as much to try his companion's truth and loyalty, as to prevent any further delay.

"Now, by the God of heaven," spake the robber, solemnly, "an ye were not my sworn brother, this night should not pass over till I had avenged the outrage you do to my fealty! God bless the emperor! for he is worthy of all honour; and long may he live to confound his enemies!"

The monarch exulted at heart in this unbought praise of a persecuted subject; and he resolved within himself, that such fidelity should not long remain unrewarded.

"Nay, comrade," quoth he, "I did but wish to save our own skin. I desire not evil to befall the emperor. Indeed, I rather love him than the contrary. But as you seem so bent on serving him, I'll shew you a better way. Go you in the morning to the palace, and tell him all. Truly, it will make you a man for life; for if he hath but a spark of the gratitude they say he has, he will reward you with honours, and riches, and power, for that you will have been thus the means of saving his life and his kingdom."

Elbegast shook his head incredulously.

"Nay, nay, brother!" he replied, "never more shall I know favour from the emperor—never more shall I see his face. Even though I did as you desire, he would call it cunning, and credit me not; but he would avenge himself on me for the misdeeds I have done to his clergy and his nobles; and I should soon dangle from a gallows, were I once in his gripe. And yet my first crime against him was but small. It is a sorrowful case—indeed it is."

"Well, then, comrade," pursued Charlemagne, "I will be the messenger myself. Go you with our booty to your band in the forest, and I shall ride hence at full speed for the palace. We meet again when time is ripe. But I must be obeyed."

"Be it so, brother," spake the robber.

They parted. Charlemagne never stopped nor stayed until he was once more within the walls of Ingelheim, secure in its

inmost chamber. Elbegast, with a heavy heart, wended his way slowly to his hiding-place in the thick pine-forest.

The "gray-eyed morn" awoke, as Charlemagne paced his apartment; and with it awoke the warders, the pages, and the imperial chamberlains, from their preternatural slumbers. The mighty monarch clapped his hands.

"Get together my council at once," said he to his secretary, who entered at the summons.

The council was convened before the first rays of the rising sun had kissed the topmost peaks of the distant Taunus mountains. The paladins of the empire were all present. The emperor entered the chamber in which they sat; and they one and all perceived that he had something of importance to communicate to them. He commenced his recital;—he told them of his dream, and they raised their eyes to heaven;—he told them of his encounter with the robber, and they rubbed their hands with joy, and their long beards wagged merrily with laughter;—he told them of the intended treason, and they were mute with horror and amaze. He then asked their advice.

"Let them come," outspake the brave old Duke of Bavaria; "it shall cost them many a life, ere they reach your heart. They must march over my dead body first."

"We are many and strong," said the Earl of Flanders, "and no ill shall betide ye while we have breath in our nostrils."

"The Franks have ever been faithful to their kings," exclaimed the Duke of Lorrain; "they will not belie their character now."

"God and the emperor!" exclaimed his impetuous nephew, Roland. "God and the emperor! Let them come on!"

And thus the discourse ran round the circle, until it was suggested by Eginhard, the emperor's young secretary, that the short time required quick shrift; and that by far the more useful and effective way to meet the foe would be, to proceed to arm their own followers. Acting on this they called together their retainers, and armed them accordingly: each paladin then took up the post assigned to him in the palace, or in its immediate precincts. By the usual hour of audience, all was in

readiness to defeat the conspiracy, and attack the traitors. The chivalry of the Round Table—

“ Roland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles that died ”—

encompassed their beloved chief, girt for the fray, and eager for the faitours ; and every precaution was taken to ensure success, for Eggerich von Eggermonde was very powerful, and his friends and retainers were many and strong.”

When the hour of audience had arrived, the palace-gates were thrown open to the public as usual ; and, within a few minutes from that period, large bodies of strange men flocked into the court-yard, in succession, from different quarters. They had, however, scarcely entered, when they were all seized and examined. Each of them was found to be armed with a short sword and a hauberk, or mailed coat ; both being concealed under a long, loose outer garment. They were then passed from the court-yard to the dungeons of the palace, without the in-coming body being in any wise aware of their fate. The last party that arrived was that of the chief-traitor, Eggerich von Eggermonde. His escort were armed to the teeth without any affectation of concealment ; for he deemed that his great power, and his close relationship with the emperor, would silence all observation on the circumstance, until it would be too late for observation to avail any thing. No sooner, however, had he passed the inner gate with his retainers, than the portcullis fell behind him with a thundering crash, and he found himself in the midst of the paladins and their forces, cut off altogether from his own followers, who, to his great dismay and horror, he beheld surrounded, disarmed, and led off, bound in chains, to a place of security. But he was not altogether cast down by this unexpected occurrence ; and he demanded loudly to be led before the emperor.

“ What’s this ? ” he spake, in an angry voice, as they ushered him into the presence of that monarch. “ How now ? Wherefore this outrage ? Speak, brother ; is this mastery wilful, and by thy command ? ”

Charlemagne hereupon charged him, in the presence of the empire, with his treason.

"It is false!" exclaimed the fierce and fearless traitor. "Who dares to say it besides yourself, my sovereign? I challenge the paladins of the Round Table—the barons of the empire—to gainsay me, or prove it. Here is my gage."

He flung down his gauntlet, as he said the words; and looked around on the assembled circle with an air of defiance, though thrice a hundred swords had sprang from their sheaths, or ever he had half finished his speech—to cut it short.

"It is well," said the emperor, waving his hand majestically, to still the commotion. "Peace, my lords! peace!" addressing himself to his peers; "the quarrel be mine, as is the accusation. I will provide me with a champion. To-morrow, an ye choose," he turned to the accused lord, as he spake, "at sunrise ye shall enter the lists with one who will make thee confess thy treason. God prosper the right!"

"To-morrow at sunrise be it then," doggedly repeated Eggerich von Eggermonde, as he was led off in custody of two of the twelve paladins of the empire to a secure part of the palace.

The council then terminated its sittings for the day.

"It may not be—nay, never can it," quoth Elbegast, to a messenger from Charlemagne, on the eve of the day following that of their separation in the pine-forest. "You speak not the words of truth. You would wile me into the emperor's power; to the end that he may punish me alone."

"Here is his act of grace, under his own imperial hand and seal," replied the messenger. "It is yours, an you obey his behest."

The robber read the document, and was satisfied. He then bestrode his stalwart steed, and accompanied the messenger to Ingelheim.

"And now," asked he of his companion, as they rode together, "keep your word—tell me what is the price of this pardon. Nothing for nothing, is the rule of courts, or was, at least, when I knew them; and, methinks, they change little in that respect, or in any other, for the better."

"To do battle to the death with a deadly foe of our sovereign lord the emperor," replied the messenger.

"God bless the emperor!" exclaimed the robber, raising his helm from his head. "I am ready to stake my life for his benefit. But against who am I to fight?"

"Eggerich von Eggermonde," said the messenger, solemnly, "—a man of potency."

"Now, praise be to Heaven," outspake Elbegast; "all is ordered as it should be. By the body of God! but there is nothing in this life or in the next which I could have more desired. Long live the emperor!"

They spurred on, and arrived at the palace late at night. The council was again sitting. Elbegast was ushered into the imperial presence, and stood at the foot of a round table, about which were arranged the paladins. He did not, however, recognise his companion of the preceding night in the emperor; by reason that the emperor on that occasion had worn his vizor down, as it has been already stated.

"God greet ye all!" he exclaimed, as he crossed the threshold of the council-chamber. "Health and happiness to the emperor!"

"Sir Elbegast," spake the monarch, "we would hear all you know touching a pending conspiracy of Eggerich von Eggermonde against our crown and dignity."

He signed with his hand, as he spake, and Eggerich von Eggermonde was brought in, and confronted with the robber.

"I impeach this lord as a traitor to the empire," said Elbegast, fearlessly, "and as a plotter against the emperor's life. If God could do wrong, he has done it in creating such a villain. And, as sure as Christ was the son of the sweet Virgin, he deserves to hang on the highest gibbet ever yet raised for malefactor; for he is bad as bad can be — a curse and a pest to all good men."

Whereupon the robber related all that passed in his hearing; and, flinging down the bloody glove, stained with the gore of the emperor's sister, he exclaimed:

"And now I am ready to prove it in mortal combat. There is my gage."

The traitor turned pale as the narrative proceeded; but by its termination he had so far overmastered the workings of his guilt, as to appear composed.

"Better it is," he said to himself, "to die in battle, than to die like a dog ——"

"Dost accept the challenge, Sir Eggerich von Eggermonde?" asked the emperor.

"Yea, to the death!" was the reply.

Once again the council separated. Both parties then withdrew to rest; or to make preparation for the coming encounter.

The morning broke as bright and beautiful as it might upon a wedding-day, although it was to witness, or ever it should be an hour old,

"Man arrayed in mutual slaughter."

The lists were prepared; the heralds at their post; the court in their places; the emperor at their head. At sunrise the barriers were flung open. The first that entered the arena was Sir Elbegast. According to the courtesy of the period, he, as the challenger, had the precedence. Careering his horse around the arena, he sprang from his saddle, as he approached the throne where Charlemagne was seated; and, bowing lowly to the emperor's greeting, he flung himself on his knees before the temporary altar erected there to the Most High, and prayed aloud.

"God of all goodness," 'twas thus ran his orison, "pity and aid me. Thou knowest my wickedness and my misdeeds; Thou knowest also that I am now to do battle in a righteous cause. Stand by me in this hour of need, I conjure Thee, by Thy five most blessed wounds, received for our salvation. And thou, Virgin mother—Virgin immaculate, Mother unstained—incline thy fond Son to pity and forgiveness of my many sins. Give but the victory to justice this day, and henceforth I shall be your faithful servant. Never more shall I plunder or rob; but worship thee night and day for ever. Amen."

He then rose from his knees, and again resumed his seat on his brave, black charger.

Eggerich von Eggermonde meanwhile had entered and taken his place, at the extremity of the lists opposite the throne. He

made obeisance to none ; he bent not even to the altar ; but he sat erect on his strong, gray steed, rigid and immovable as a statue.

"Let the signal be given," spake the emperor. "God defend the right ! Courage ! my brave champion," he addressed himself in an undertone to Sir Elbegast. "Heaven fights with us. I know all."

The sharp shrilly note of a silver trumpet rang clear through the cool morning air. Not a sound was heard beside. The crowded lists were immovable, and seemingly breathless too.

"God defend the right !" echoed the marshal of the field. "On, Sirs ! On !"

The combatants buried their long spurs in the flanks of their steeds. They charged :—the shock was like that of two mountains. Yet neither was unhorsed.

Again the silver trumpet sounded, and again they charged. Valour and skill were with both ; and once more they drew off unhurt.

A third time, with fresh lances, they rushed on each other at the warning-note. But this time Sir Eggerich von Eggermonde was flung from his saddle, clean over his horse's crupper, far into the arena beyond ; while Sir Elbegast lost his lance, which had been shivered to splinters in the shock.

Sir Eggerich, however, soon recovered the effects of his fall. He was on his legs in a moment, and had drawn his two-handed sword over his shoulder ere his opponent was well aware of his intention.

"Now, by the fiend !" quoth the traitor, "you and your horse shall die, an you alight not. It were pity to slay that noble animal. But die he shall, an you alight not at once."

He whirled his weapon twice round his head, as in the act to strike ; but Sir Elbegast, before the blow fell, had made his docile steed spring backwards full a dozen paces. The heavy sword sunk deep in the soil ; and such was the force of the intended blow, that it required an exertion of strength, and some little time to recover it. In the meanwhile Sir Elbegast had drawn his trenchant blade, and was in full caracole beside his false-hearted adversary.

"Traitor that thou art !" he exclaimed, "accursed of God

and of man ! what remains for me but to slay thee as thou standest there ? ”

“ Strike ! ” shouted the dauntless villain. “ A man can die but once ! Strike ! ”

“ Nay, never shall it be said, ” resumed Elbegast, “ that I fought a foe at an odds. ”

He sprung from his demi-pique saddle, as he uttered the words ; and in a moment more was foot to foot and face to face with his opponent. They then battled in good earnest. But what boots it to tell of a fierce encounter, more than that the two best men of the bravest nation under the sun did their very utmost to destroy each other ? The fight ended in the death of Sir Eggerich von Eggermonde. With one down-handed blow his enemy cut through helm and hair, and clove his skull to the chine.

“ God be praised ! ” exclaimed Charlemagne. “ His ways are wise, and His wisdom is inscrutable ! Give Him thanks, my people ! ”

The monarch knelt for a minute at the altar, and the crowd all humbled themselves in the same solemn guise. Sir Elbegast bent the knee also in prayer and thanksgiving. It was a beautiful sight to see.

“ Come hither, my friend, ” said the emperor to Elbegast. “ Know ye me ? ”

He drew down his vizor and cast off his surcoat, as he spake ; and the victor recognised in a moment his companion of a previous night—his fellow-plunderer. The emperor then cast a black cloak over his shoulders ; and again the robber recognised in him the messenger who had come with the imperial act of grace to bring him from his retreat in the pine-forest to the palace of Ingelheim, on the preceding evening.

“ God’s will be done ! ” he exclaimed. “ I am ready to atone for my sins. ”

“ And I am as ready to reward thy merits, ” spake Charlemagne.

The applausive courtiers cheered this sentiment of their sovereign.

“ From this hour be thou lord of the broad lands that

belonged to yon dead traitor: be ever by my side, as my best and most faithful friend; and would ye wish a noble wife," continued the good-humoured monarch, "as I know ye are single, and as I will vouch for your honour with mine, even take his widow, my own dear sister."

Again the complaisant crowd applauded the magnanimity of their sovereign. Sir Elbegast was too full of gratitude to speak; but his looks were more eloquent than any words could be expressive.

From thenceforward the emperor and his friend Sir Elbegast were never more separated.

The dead body of the traitor, Sir Eggerich von Eggermonde was hung on a gibbet fifty feet high.

The palace was called Ingelheim, or Engelheim (the Angel's Home), ever since, in memory of this circumstance and of the celestial visit which led to it.

And thus entered this most wonderful adventure.

The legends of Eginhard and Emma, and the Empress Hildegard, are too curious to be omitted in this work, although more than a proportionate space has been already devoted to Ingelheim.

EGINHARD AND EMMA.

There is a curious story of the marriage of Eginhard, secretary to Charlemagne, and Emma, or Imma, one of the daughters of that powerful sovereign. As Gibbon has not disdained to employ his pen in refutation of this union, on the grounds alleged by Eginhard himself against the chastity and morals of this fair dame and her sisters,* it would not be pardonable to

* He says, "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," cap. xlix. note E. "The marriage of Eginhard with Imma, daughter of Charlemagne, is, in my opinion, sufficiently refuted by the *probrum* and *suspicio* that sullied these fair damsels, without excepting his own wife (c. xix. pp. 98-100, cum Notis Schmincke). The husband must have been too strong for the historian." And no one who has read the work of Eginhard alluded to, but must come to the same conclusion;—that is, that the story is a fable, and nothing more.

omit the tale alluded to in a work of this nature. A poetical, or, rather, rhymed version of it, from the German of Pfeffel,* is given here in preference to the simple prose of the original legend:—

Haste, love, and shut the hall-door to,
And hand my harp to me ;
And of a maiden, fair and true,
I'll sing a song to thee.

That German hero, Charlemagne,
Of this fair maid was sire,
Whose feats 'gainst Moors and Saxons rang
Throughout his vast empire.

Oh ! like her sire was Emma not,
But mild as morn in May ;
Like blushing rose-buds, cheeks she 'd got ;
Her eyes beamed heaven's own ray.

From men, mamma close kept her barred ;
No knight the sweet maid saw,
Save the secretary Eginhard,
Who wrote for her papa.

A comely youth he was, I ween ;
Thick curls o'er clear brow wave,
Lithe-limbed, his dark eyes glanced sheen ;
As Roland † was he brave.

The winter through she lessons took
From him in writing's art ;
Though on her ciphers scarce she'd look,
His form so filled her heart.

The tenderness of sweet seventeen
Full oft makes maiden fall ;
Ere long young Eginhard, 'twas seen,
To her was all in all.

* Poetische Versuche Zweite Theil. s. xcvi. Ed. 1796.

† Roland, or Orlando, nephew of the emperor, more than once already alluded to in this work.

One day her sire the gont did seize,
His spouse with him did stay ;
Fair Hildegard at chess did please
To pass the time away.

'Twas Candlemas ; and cold enow
Sate Eginhard frost-bound,
Till devil-drove, he scarce knew how,
Fair Emma's bower he found.

Lay she a-bed ? Upon that score
Our chronicler says nought ;
But till the clock twelve hours told o'er,
The youth good warming got.

Now matins peal. A burning buss
Awakes him. Lack-a-day !
The court-yard—what a pretty fuss !—
With snow deep-sheeted lay.

“ What's this ? ” he cries. “ Good God of heaven !
If footstep mine be seen,
To the headsman's sword my head is given—
To the cloister ye, I ween.”

Mute as the mother of all grief,*
The maiden paced her room ;
On sudden seems she feels relief,
She cries, “ Quick, dearest, come ! ”

Then on her back she bore him straight,
Beneath the moon-beam bright,
Across the court unto the gate,
Where sprang he down so light.

But, oh ! protect them, heavenly powers !
This hapless pair shield ye !—
From forth his casement Charles down glowers
On this strange chivalry.

* Mater Dolorosa.

His sword he grasps—'twas in despair—
Like light he rushes fast.
“Die, both!” he shouts. “No! first prepare.
Here, chaplain! holla! haste!”

The priest aroused, now hurries fussed,
With surplice hung awry,
His doublet loose, his hose untrussed—
The king's call makes him fly.

He sees—but Hogarth's self alone
The scene should limn—the maid
Knelt low, her sire's glaive o'er her shone,
Mute, near, her lover staid.

“What's now?” Priest Engelbert slow drawls,
With one hand in his hair.
“Quick!” cries the king—his sword downfalls—
“And marry me this pair.”

So far the poet. The legend, however, goes further, and relates how the incensed monarch banished his daughter and her lover from the court; how they crossed the Rhine; and how they took up their humble abode in a low and lonely hut in the Odenwald, not far from the mouth of the Maine.

Here they dwelt in peace and pleasure for upwards of seven years, “the world forgetting, by the world forgot.” At the end of that period, it happened that Charlemagne, hunting in the neighbourhood, passed their door, and, feeling exhausted, asked for some refreshment. They knew him at once; but he did not recognise them: for he had lost all traces of their flight; and years and rustic toil had made a considerable change in their countenances. He entered their humble abode; and his delighted daughter set about making ready the meal, which, in days of yore, she was once accustomed to prepare for his royal palate. Fatigue and hard exercise had sharpened his

appetite to that degree, that, though never over-nice, as a warrior always should be, in the matter of food, he felt that nothing could then come amiss to his mouth. What his surprise was, however, on seating himself at table, may better be imagined than described, when he found placed before him in all its raciness the favourite dish, which none but his daughter Emma could cook to his entire satisfaction. The secret was out. He at once discovered his entertainers. Eginhard, who had gone forth to look after the horses of the emperor's retinue, was recalled and re-introduced to his father-in-law; and he found the mighty sovereign weeping over his wife, whose head was hidden in his bosom; and he flung himself at his feet.

"Rise, my children," cried the monarch, overpowered with his paternal emotions, "rise, my beloved children. Happy am I to find you here this day. Blessed be the spot where we have met; and blessed be it called from this day forward and for ever."

They all returned to Ingelheim the same night. Next day in full court, Charles presented the pair to his assembled feudatories; and then bestowed on them a large tract of territory, including the Odenwald.

One child, a beautiful boy, who gave promise of a distinguished manhood, was the only fruit of their union; but he was unhappily torn from them by the inexorable hand of fate. He died young.

"Whom the gods love, die young."

The disconsolate mother did not long survive him. Eginhard on her death built a cloister on the spot where they became reconciled to her sire, and endowed it with all his worldly possessions. He occupied the remainder of his life in compiling the history of his father-in-law and the annals of Franconia, or the kingdom of the Franks. On his death-bed he directed that his body should be buried in the same coffin with that of his beloved wife; which was accordingly done. To this day their monument is shewn in the church of Seligenstadt (Blessed Spot), a town which sprang up round the abbey built by Eginhard on the "Blessed Spot" where the reconciliation between him, his wife, and her sire took place; so named according to the expression of

the potent emperor on that occasion. But the monument is all that remains of them; for the coffin containing their relics was sent as a present, in recent times, by the Grand Duke of Hesse, in whose dominions the town was situated, to the Count of Erbach, who claimed descent in a right line from the illustrious secretary of Charlemagne. It is still shewn in the ancient hall of the castle of Erbach, with many other monuments of "the olden time."

True history tells us that Eginhard was one of the most learned men of his age; and that he was, moreover, a most accomplished statesman. His works are still considered the best authority for all that relates to the period in which he lived. It is not by any means certain that he married the daughter of Charlemagne, although the weight of incontestable evidence would seem equally balanced for and against the supposition. Her sister Bertha, it is a well-known fact, made a secret marriage with her tutor Engelbert (the priest of the poem), and had offspring by him the celebrated statesman and historian Neidhard. Why may not Eginhard have married Emma? The mighty Emperor Charlemagne seems to have been any thing but fortunate in the females of his family.

THE EMPRESS HILDEGARD.

Of the Empress Hildegard, one of the "nine wives"* of Charlemagne, this legend is related.

When this great monarch went forth to the Saxon war, he confided his beloved bride Hildegard, who remained at Ingelheim in his absence, to the care of his half-brother Taland. Hildegard was young and beautiful, and of high birth; she was also good, and chaste, and pious. Every one loved her; but Taland loved her with an unholy passion. Taland was a bad, bold man; and as he had no scruples, so he saw a chance of success. He determined to obtain possession of his sister-

* "The great qualities of Charlemagne," says Hallam, with much truth and propriety, "were indeed alloyed by the vices of a barbarian and a conqueror. Nine wives, whom he divorced with very little ceremony, attest the license of his private life, which his temperance and frugality can hardly be said to redeem."—*View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, vol. i.

in-law's person; and, with a treachery unexampled even at the period, he made to her his most base proposals.

It was on the evening-tide of as lovely a day as ever shone upon the valley of the Rhine, that he sought her in her bower, and confessed his foul passion. The queen knew not what to say or what to do in this emergency. His power was great; indeed, his brother had delegated to him all that which he himself possessed; the confidence the king had in him was unlimited; and Charlemagne himself was in Saxony, far away from all effectual aid. She knew Taland was reckless as well as ruthless. In short, as I have already said, she knew not what to say or to do. At once, however, a thought struck her; and she immediately resolved to put it in execution.

"Hie thee," she said to the false brother of her spouse, "hie thee to the wood, and there in the most shady recess of the forest build ye for me a lone and secret bower. It would not beseem my troth or thy allegiance to the king, that we should be taken together in amorous dalliance. Until then, speak no more on the subject. I shall measure thy love by thy expedition. But, by all means, let it be strong and secure within and without."

Taland kissed her white hand, and flew to execute his mission. In a few days he again stood before her in her private chamber.

"Thy commands are executed, fair Hildegard," spake he; "now make me happy."

"But bethink thee," said the queen, "what may be the result. I fear me much I cannot consent."

"Nay, by heaven!" replied he, "you must do so now. Your word is plighted."

"Well, then, let us go," quoth the queen, soothingly; for she saw that he was no longer to be trifled with.

They sped quickly through the wood by concealed paths which led from the palace, and were known to few save the royal family. In the thickest part of the forest stood a small building of great strength. It was so situated as to defy discovery, unless the whole wood was cut down or uprooted around it.

"Here," said the impatient traitor, "is the bower I built for you. Here shall we taste the joys of love."

They approached the narrow doorway.

"See," continued he, "I have caused it to be made according to thy will in every particular. These walls would withstand the assault of one of my brother's battering-rams; and the power of a catapult could not force this massive door."

"But how does it fasten?" inquired Hildegard.

"So," said he, stepping within the door, and shutting it to, to shew her.

"So," exclaimed she, suddenly turning the key on the outside, and drawing it from the lock, "you are now my prisoner; and there shall you stay until thy lord and my husband, the king, comes from the wars."

Six days she detained him in close durance, supplying him herself with food through a narrow grating in the door. At the expiration of that period, touched with compassion at the prostrate state in which he seemed, and confiding too much in his promises of repentance and expressions of sorrow, she liberated him. From thenceforward he became her most deadly foe: every thought of his mind was directed to the one darling object of his heart—revenge. Day and night he brooded over it; morning and evening he plotted for it. We shall see in what way he obtained his wicked end.

Charlemagne, after defeating his foes, returned home quite unexpectedly. Taland, however, had a previous intimation from an emissary, attached to his brother's suite, of his coming; and, affecting a joy which he did not feel, he hastened forth to meet and welcome him to court. He communicated the news to no one; even the queen had no inkling of her husband's proximity until he stood before her. But in the meantime the wicked Taland had instilled the poison of jealousy into his brother's breast.

"Where is Hildegard?" asked the hero, when he saw Taland.

"She tarries your coming at Ingelheim," replied he, "the journey mayhap was too great for her. Why we are now a full day's ride from the palace. Oh! but she is a patient lady."

Charlemagne's great heart rose within him at this insinuation of altered love on the part of his spouse. Taland saw that his opportunity had arrived, and he availed himself of it. In short, before they reached Ingelheim, he had succeeded in making his brother believe the virtuous Hildegard the most abandoned of her sex.

As they neared the palace by a private way, the traitor pointed out the unsuspecting queen to the view of her husband. Unconscious of his coming, she sat alone in the window of her bower; busied, apparently, with her long yellow tresses, which floated unconfined in the light breeze of the evening; but, in reality, buried in deep thought of her beloved husband. Little recked she of his proximity to her, or she would have sprung from the highest turret of the palace rather than be backward to embrace him.

"There," said the double-traitor Taland to the king, "there she sits. Observe her closely. Think you that any woman, who waits so calmly her husband's coming after such a long absence, can love him?"

Charlemagne entered the palace by a private door, and summoned the provost, a principal officer, secretly to his chamber.

"Take the queen," said he to him—"bind her face—bear forth to the forest—and there put out her eyes. Then leave her to her fate. Delay—and you die. Go!"

The trembling official bowed and departed. He did not dare to hesitate, still less to question the cause of this cruel command, though he was both shocked and surprised at it; for he saw the king was in no mood to be trifled with, and he knew his own life was at stake.

"God of heaven!" cried the hapless Hildegard, when she saw the soft sunlight streaming through the trees as they removed the thick black bandage from her face. "God of heaven! where am I? What would you with me?"

The provost and his two grim-looking assistants made ready to execute their orders; but, rugged as they were, they set about the sad task with evident reluctance. The good queen had won even their hard hearts to pity and regard.

"O God! and must it be so?" she exclaimed, when they told her what was their object. "O God! whether or not I deserve this at my husband's hands, you best know."

"Make ready, ladye," said the provost, "and forgive us. We are but the slaves of the king; and his breath is our life or death."

"I pardon you," replied the queen, "I pardon you from my soul. A minute more, permit me, only to pray; and then do as you will. God pity me, man may not."

She prayed fervently, while her executioners stood at a little distance, looking on her as though she were an angel from heaven. The old provost wiped away a tear from his eye, as she rose, and made a sign that she was ready to meet her fate.

"What is that?" whispered one of his assistants.

They listened, laying their ears to the ground for a moment.

"It is the tramp of a horse," said another.

"Save me! save me!" shrieked the queen.

The echo of her shriek had scarce died in the distance, when an armed knight, spurring his foaming steed through bush and brake and brier, sprang into the midst of the group. His lance was levelled at the executioners: his eyes glanced like burning coals through the black bars of his vizor.

"Save me! save me!" shrieked the queen, "but spare them."

"Hildegard!" exclaimed the knight. He threw up his vizor.

"Otto!" exclaimed Hildegard.

The knight was at her side in a moment: in another, his broad bright glaive glistened in his hand. But the provost and his minions had fled. Knowing they could not cope with an armed warrior, and happy to be exempt by any means from the ungracious task imposed on them, they sped back like the winds.

Graf Otto, who was the queen's sister's husband, on being informed of the particulars, bore her away to his own castle; from whence, with only his wife's privy, he conveyed her, immediately after, to a hidden place in the mountains on the other side of the Rhine. The provost and his assistants took council together in their flight; and, on their arrival at the palace, told the king that they had acted according to his orders. Every circumstance thus happily concurred to conceal the hapless Hildegard's fate from her husband. He believed that she had perished miserably in the forest; and, though he could not avoid an occasional pang at the remembrance of the past, he soon succeeded in quieting his remorse, and in almost forgetting her altogether.

When the queen deemed all danger well-nigh over, by the assistance of her sister, she procured the company of a noble maiden, Rosina von Bodmin; and, disguised as male pilgrims, they proceeded to Rome, giving out in their way, that they went thither to procure absolution from the pope for a heavy sin in which both had participated. Their journey was much facilitated by the cures which the queen worked on many who were sick, sore, and infirm, through her deep knowledge of the medicinal properties of various plants, herbs, and flowers; and half the toils of the way were alleviated by the gratitude of those whose health she thus restored. In due time they reached the eternal city. Adrian the First then filled the pontifical throne of the Christian world. They at once established themselves in Rome, with the permission of the holy father, first resuming the garb of their sex: and there Hildegard worked such wonderful cures, that she was deemed little less than a denizen of heaven dwelling in the shape of woman upon earth.

In the meanwhile, it may be as well to revert to what occurred at Ingelheim.

Taland was stricken by the hand of God with a disease which baffled the skill of all the physicians at the court, or in the whole compass of the wide dominions of Charlemagne. He wasted away, until his bones almost protruded through his skin; and he looked like a living skeleton.

"Come to Rome with me," said the king to him one day. "The pope has appealed to me for aid against the king of the Lombards, and I must go to his assistance. You can there consult the wonderful woman, whose fame for curing all deadly and dangerous diseases has spread even to the shores of the Rhine from the banks of the Tiber."

All was soon prepared for the march; Charlemagne rode at the head of his troops on his journey to Rome; and Taland was carried in a litter. The march and its sequel is wholly in the province of general history, with which this story has little or nothing to do; and we shall therefore pass it over, and come at once to its conclusion. Immediately on his arrival in the capital of Christendom, Taland sought, without a moment's delay, the abode of the injured Hildegard: all unconscious

that the wondrous female physician was his much-wronged sister-in-law. He was not long in finding it; for every one knew where their benefactress dwelt; and every tongue was eloquent in her praise. Hildegard was not entirely unprepared for this visit, for she had held regular intelligence of her husband's court from her sister and her brother-in-law.

A long, dark passage, lighted at the extremity by one faint taper, was entered, and the wasted Taland saw before him a female garbed in black flowing robes. He approached her humbly: sickness and sorrow had brought down the pride of his spirit, and softened the hardness of his heart.

"Who art thou?" asked Rosina, for she it was who thus met him by order of her mistress.

"A miserable wretch," answered he, sighing deeply.

"Thy name?" inquired she.

"Men call me Taland," replied the wasted form. "My brother is the great king Charlemagne."

"Thy business here?" she spake, after a moment's pause. "Be brief."

"To be healed of a mortal malady," said he, sadly, "if God so wills it, and you refuse not to take my case in hand."

"Not me," said the maiden, "but my mistress. I am only the meanest of her handmaidens. Seat thee on this couch, and wait here until my return. I go to advertise her of your coming."

In a few minutes Rosina returned.

"Haste, shrive thee at once," she resumed; "confess thy sins to the holy father. Thus my mistress speaks. Then take this drug. If thy repentance be not sincere, it will have no power to cure thee; if it be, you will again recover your health. Be ready to come here when she calls for thee."

Hildegard, within an hour from that time, had reminded the pope of her singular story, and obtained his renewed promise of aid and intervention in her favour, if they were found necessary.

Taland did as she directed; and, from that very hour his recovery became apparent to all. Within less than a month, he had regained his strength and spirits; but he was an altered man in his mind. Charlemagne wondered much at the rapidity of his recovery; and his wonder grew into great curiosity to

see the being who could effect such a seeming miracle. The more he heard of her—and no tongue was silent in her praise—the more his desire was excited. At length he despatched an officer of his palace to pray her presence next day at his court, that he might do her heavenly skill all due honour; but, to his great surprise, the following answer to his invitation was promptly brought back by the courtier:

“O king! She bade me say,” thus spake the messenger, “she will not come to thy court. The palaces of princes are not for her; and she may not at present visit them. But she will meet thee at the tenth hour to-morrow, in the morning, at the high altar of St. Peter’s, and there, in the presence of the living God greet thee.”

“Good,” said the king. “I’ll go.”

At ten the next morning he entered the cathedral of Christendom. As he approached the high altar, he perceived the pope clothed in full pontificals seated on the upper step: beside him stood two strangers garbed as pilgrims. The church was crowded with soldiers and priests; for the conjoint courts of the pope and the emperor were present on the occasion.

“Here, my son,” said the father of the Christian world to Charlemagne, “here is the wonderful physician you wish to know of.”

At this moment the queen flung off her pilgrim’s garb, and stood revealed to the astonished king. A moment more, and old affections had resumed all their accustomed sway;—they were clasped in each other’s arms like long-parted lovers.

“Bless you both, my beloved children!” said the venerable pontiff tremulously, with tears in his aged eyes;—“bless ye, bless ye!”

Hildegard told her simple tale in the presence of the assembled multitude. Ten thousand swords leaped from their scabbards as she concluded the affecting narrative. High above all waved the trenchant blade of the king, as he sprang towards the guilty Taland for the purpose of anticipating the vengeance of the infuriate multitude, who thronged on him too like the in-coming waves of a stormy ocean. But Hildegard had likewise anticipated this scene; and, ere her husband could reach him, she stood between the brothers—the guardian angel of both.

"Spare him," she spake, and the raging of the multitude ceased for a moment at her voice. "He is repentant."

The king made as though he would smite him dead: the armed multitude again heaved tumultuously towards the traitor.

"For my sake," she cried. "Who strikes him shall do it through me. God wills it."

"Whoso spills blood in God's house, let him be accursed," said the pope, solemnly.

"Amen," responded the attendant ecclesiastics.

"God wills it. Be it so," exclaimed the king.

"God wills it," shouted the crowd.

"But," continued the monarch, "justice must have its course. Go, base man, no longer brother of mine. Take your forfeit life: but be banished for ever from our presence."

"A righteous judgment," said the holy father. "Be it so."

"Amen," again chorused the ecclesiastics.

The guilty Taland went forth; and, on the utmost limits of his brother's broad dominions, lived and died in obscurity. Charlemagne and the happy Hildegard returned shortly after to Ingelheim, where they made sunshine all around them.

The proud palace of Ingelheim, the birthplace and favourite abode of Charlemagne, has been a ruin for several centuries. "In the gateway, which still stands," says Goethe,* "there is to be seen a piece of a white marble pillar built into the wall, on which is engraven the following inscription, of the date of the thirty years' war:

"Eight hundred years ago, this structure was the palace of Charlemagne and of Ludwig the Pious, his son; also, in 1044, of the Emperor Henry (the 5th); and, in 1360, of the Emperor Charles (the 4th), king of Bohemia. The pillars of the great hall were brought from Ravenna by Charlemagne; a portion of one of which is now re-erected here in the Lower Palatinate, in honour of the Emperor Ferdinand the 2d, of Germany, and the King Philip the 4th of Spain, the 6th April, 1623."

Ingelheim palace suffered severely in the wars which ensued

* Reise am Rhein, Mayn und Neckar.

between Frederick the Victorious, Prince Palatine of the Lower Rhine, and Adolph, archbishop of Mainz, A.D. 1239. Several diets of the empire, and some councils of the church, were held within its walls during its occupation as a pleasure-palace by the emperors of Germany. Charles the Fourth was the last of these sovereigns who resided in it. The ground-plan of the original palace may still be traced: and Goethe relates, that in his time the locality of the ancient kitchen was discovered, by the circumstance of a great number of boars' tusks, and bones of other edible animals being dug up on the spot.

Sic transit gloria mundi.

RHEIN-AUE.

Almost midway in the Rhine, below Ingelheim, lies a long narrow island, named Rhein-Aue. To this island, it is said, Charlemagne often resorted to enjoy the sport of fishing, when he held his court on the shores of the river; and here, also, his hapless son, Ludwig the Mild, ended his persecuted life, after having been for years an exile and an outcast—driven from place to place by his unnatural and rebellious sons;—at least, so says tradition.

LUDWIG THE MILD.

Ludwig the Mild, better known to the readers of general history as Louis le Débonnair, and Louis the Pious,* was, perhaps, one of the most unfortunate princes on record. The death of his father, Charlemagne, left him sole master of an immense empire founded and perfected by the valour and wisdom of that great monarch and his predecessors: yet his life was one continuous scene of calamity; and his death occurred under circum-

* "These names," says Hallam, in a sensible note to his excellent work (*State of Europe*, vol. i. cap. 1. part 1. § France), "as a French writer observes, meant the same thing. *Pius* had, even in good Latin, the sense of *mitis*, meek, forbearing, or what the French call *débonnair*." This learned author has preferred the word *débonnair*, for reasons which he explains; the word "mild" has been adopted here as more consonant to the Teutonic term *Fromme*; the subjects of which this work treats being essentially German.

stances of privation and distress not often endured even by the most hapless of deposed sovereigns.

“ In more peaceful times Ludwig the Mild would have been an excellent sovereign ; but among the rugged Franks, at that rude period, he proved only a weak prince. What his sire effected by strength of purpose and force of arms, he sought to accomplish by gentleness and good-will, but without the same success. On the contrary, misfortune followed misfortune in such rapid and undeviating consecutiveness, that his whole life was one continuous struggle against his adverse fate.” Such is the statement of the best-informed historians : such is the opinion of even his warmest partisans.

His first grand mistake was the partition of the empire among his three sons, Lothaire, Ludwig, and Pepin. This he did after the example of his father, who had made a similar arrangement in his lifetime ; and the same evil effect resulted from it ; that is to say, discord between themselves and rebellion against his paramount authority. To Pepin he gave Gaul or Aquitaine ; to Ludwig, Bavaria ; and to Lothaire, the German empire, with the joint title of emperor. It is said that he was induced to this impolitic act by the hope of appeasing the constant dissensions which existed in his family ; but he only “ sowed the wind to reap the whirlwind ” (A.D. 814).

The next error into which he fell was connected with his second marriage. Irmengarde, his first wife, mother of his three sons, having died, he espoused another, Guta, or Judith, daughter of Welf or Guelf, duke of Bavaria, one of his own feudatories. She was the fairest maiden in Germany ; and she was as ambitious as she was fair ; and as unscrupulous as she was ambitious. Her first care was to surround the court with her own creatures, so as to exclude from the presence of Ludwig all those whom she considered inimical to the main objects she had in view. The chief of these was Bernard, duke of Septimania, her own special favourite, afterwards branded as her unlawful lover ; and him she procured to be put in the place of Wala, the king's cousin, abbot of Corvey, and principal officer of state of the empire, whom she persuaded the facile Ludwig to banish to his own monastery. In due course she gave birth to a son, subsequently known as Charles the Bald ; and, proceeding on her suggestions,

a diet was called at Worms by the king, for the purpose of making a fresh partition of the empire so as to include the new-comer (A.D. 816-17).

This was the signal for an outbreak on the part of the two elder sons, Pepin and Lothaire ; and accordingly they collected a large armed force, and took field at Compeigne in France. The exiled Wala placed himself at the head of this force, which advanced towards the Rhine by rapid marches. After various successes, the rebels obtained the upper hand of the emperor : Ludwig was deposed : Guta and her son exiled to a monastery : her brothers were compelled to renounce the world, and become monks : and Bernard, her favourite, was deprived of his eyes by the conquerors. The infant Charles was then declared a bastard : his mother having been condemned as an adulteress by the incensed Wala (A.D. 820).

The rebellious sons, however, were no sooner relieved from the restraint of their sire, than they proceeded to quarrel among themselves. The bonds of the wicked are but as a rope of sand. They could not agree as to the proportion of power which was to be shared by each ; nor would either endure that the others should have the mastery. The consequence was, that Ludwig once more obtained his freedom and his crown ; and once more did his unnatural offspring subject themselves to his chief authority (A.D. 830).

But Ludwig was now no longer able to wield the imperial sceptre even as he did of yore ; for his spirit was wholly broken by reverses ; and he sorrowed for the calamities which had befallen him, like a weak woman, rather than sought to avert them by fortitude and activity. Accordingly, we find once more opposed to him his rebellious sons, who had again taken up arms on the old plea of partition in favour of the infant Charles. The result of this campaign was the betrayal of Ludwig by his troops into the hands of Lothaire, his unnatural son. To the present hour the spot where this shameful transaction took place, is known as the "Lying Field."* The hapless emperor was compelled to perform public penance by Lothaire : and the son of

* It lies near Than, in Alsace, almost at the foot of the Vosges mountains.

Charlemagne actually stood in the centre aisle of the church of Soissons, a barefooted penitent, in the presence of thirty bishops, innumerable priests, and an immense crowd of his own subjects, and there proclaimed himself aloud to all, an evil-doer, an enemy of the church, and an obstacle to the peace of his own kingdom. He was then transferred to a cell, where he passed some time, subject to every mortification which could be put in practice towards him (A.D. 833.)

Lothaire thought, by this unnecessary severity, so far to degrade his father as to render him for ever after incapable of governing such a proud people as the Franks ; but he altogether miscalculated the effects it produced, as was proved by the sequel. This cruel course only excited a feeling of horror in the public mind ; and it wholly alienated from him the support of his best friends. Among others that discountenanced these proceedings was Ludwig, his brother ; who, not satisfied with expressing his dissent from them, raised a large army, wherewith to effect his father's deliverance. • Lothaire was not slow to follow his example, or to face him in the field ; lack of courage not being one of his vices. But for once might was right : the army of Ludwig outnumbered the troops of Lothaire ; and the latter was defeated with immense loss. This victory once more gave to the hapless sire his crown and kingdom (A.D. 837).

A reconciliation, effected by Pepin, between Lothaire and his father, was speedily followed by the death of the mediator ; and this circumstance, by leaving the original partition of the empire as it stood, was the cause of the peace which Ludwig enjoyed during the brief remainder of his life. Charles the Bald was inducted into the place of Pepin ; and thus the *vexata quæstio*, which had torn the empire to pieces, obstructed the progress of civilisation, and developed so much that is hideous in human nature during its discussion, was set at rest for ever (A.D. 838).

Ludwig the Mild, that " man of many sorrows," and who was so " well acquainted with grief," expired, on the 20th June (A.D. 840), on an island in the Rhine, directly under his palace of Ingelheim, generally believed to be Rhein-Aue island. He pardoned his rebellious sons ; but he desired his attendants

specially to inform them, that it was through their act that his gray hairs had been brought with shame and sorrow to the grave.

“ I do not know,” says an impartial historian,* “ that Louis deserves so much contempt as he has undergone ; but historians have in general more indulgence for splendid crimes than for the weakness of virtue.” And further on he adds: “ The fault lay entirely in his own heart ; and this fault was nothing but a temper too soft, and a conscience too strict.” But another—and he will pardon me for adding—a greater than he ; one, too, whom he has closely followed in his summary relation of facts in connexion with this prince’s history—Montesquieu†—has described him as “ a prince, the sport of his own passions—the dupe, even, of his own virtues ; a prince, who knew not his own strength, and was ignorant of his own weakness : who was incapable of conciliating love, or exciting fear : and who, with few vices of the heart, had all manner of defects in his disposition.” Perhaps the truth lies between both. However that may be, every gentle heart will murmur over his remains, *Requiescat in pace*.

* Hallam, “ View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages,” vol. i. cap. 1. part 1. p. 18.

† “ De L’Esprit des Loix,” livre xxxi. cap. 20.

ELFELDT.

Elfeldt, the principal place of the Rhein-Gau, was, in ancient times, a well-known Roman station, named Alta Villa. Hence its present name, by elision and corruption. In the fourteenth century Elfeldt was raised to the rank of a town by Ludwig of Bavaria; and placed under the stewardships of the counts of Elz, an old family resident in the neighbourhood, and who subsequently took up their abode in the castle, which still exists on the river's edge.

It is of the fortunes of one of these nobles that the following wild legend tells the tale; which, truth being spoken, must be taken with large allowances for veraciousness; and adopted with considerable caution as to implicit belief.

THE KNIGHT AND THE YELLOW DWARF.

The bravest knight was Ferdinand,
By the broad Rhine the boldest ;
In blood full rich, though poor in land—
From lords of lineage oldest.
A worldling through the world he flung ;
And kissed and courted, played and sung ;
And loved a luscious story—
And wildly wished for glory.

Yet still such life can no man long,
When lack of means o'erpowers ;
The fruits of love too oft belong
Alone to golden showers.
This thought his high heart aye did sap,
And point him e'en in pleasure's lap ;
But joys to grasp which failed him,
And wants whose memory quailed him.

A tournament the kaiser gave,
His nuptial feast's rejoicing—
From the Danube to the North Sea's wave
Was heard but lyre's sweet voicing.
Not to the Rhine they all belong—
From Ister, Neister, Po, Thames, throng
Bold knights and dames, bright glancing,
To tourney, feast, and dancing.

And Ferdinand, in shame and grief,
Through his emptied halls is rushing ;
In vain he thinks to find relief,
The nectar'd wine-cup crushing.
By poverty forbade the feast,
He seeks some dread abyss in haste,
His days to end designing—
His soul to death consigning.

But 'gainst him on his course there came
A little dwarf, all yellow ;
In face and clothing quite the same :
And spake thus the poor fellow :

“ Faint-hearted knight, what would'st thou do ?
Would'st sell thyself—and priceless, too ?
From th' East to the sun's hiding
Would'st the richest peer be biding ?”

“ But what to do ?” inquired the knight,
Whilst hope his dim eyes brighten—

“ Hear ! for each sack of gold so bright
You me henceforth shall lighten.”

The little Malabar outsaid :

“ A single hair from off thy head,
Of gratitude the token,
For me must then be broken.”

“ A single hair ?—a hundred take,”
Cried Ferdinand, delighted,
And plucks up heart : “ But one I'll break,”
The dwarf said, ere he flyted.

He then cut off the little hair,
And handed him a sack so fair,
A thousand florins folding —
His guilt's first earnest holding.

And Ferdinand bethought him now
'T were dreams that might provoke him :
But in his hand the gold's bright glow
From mood like this soon woke him.
He speeds his home in haste unto,
And peace or rest he never knew,
Till to both balls and tourneys
In brave plight forth he journeys.

His clothing cost the pigmy wight
Of sacks, yea, more than twenty ;
His horse, a brilliant barb, snow-white,
Had purple housings plenty.
Of sky-blue steel his harness shone—
His sword-hilt held an opal stone—
Two heron-plumes his helmet :
Two gold rings on his shield met.

Thus dight, he for the jousts quick makes,
 Impelled by high desire ;
 His arm the proudest prize there takes—
 His eye love's brightest fire.
 On him the gay dames scarce did gaze,
 When hearts flew forth in eyes' bland rays ;
 And Ferdinand's agreement
 As kissing's cheek was ne meant.

When feast and tourney finished were,
 To court the monarch spake him :
 He goes, and ere his fourth year there,
 Is sad as sin can make him.
 The dwarf each day departure took ;
 But midnight's chimes had never struck,
 When he was aye appearing
 Another sack still bearing.

Life's rude enjoyments soon exhaust
 A giant's strength and power :
 By gout an arm and foot's use lost—
 His stagnate blood steals slower ;
 And, half a corpse, diseased he lies
 Upon his damask couch, and cries,
 " Here ! doctor, 's ducats many !"—
 He can't get ease from any !

His fevered fancy now portrays
 His sins, in sight dismaying ;
 Like fearful furies, in a blaze,
 Before his eyes they're baying.
 In burning pain, with curses dread,
 He tears the thinn'd hairs from his head ;
 With impious hands, for ever,
 Then seeks life's thread to sever !

Unhelp'd his glaive he cannot use ;
 The prince of hell then praying
 Unto his aid : one slight glance shews
 The dwarf beside him staying ;—

He reaches him a rope of hair,
“ Here, take,” he says, “ this guerdon fair
I had from thee, and try it :”—
They found him hanging by it !

INGELHEIMER AUE.

Ingelheimer Aue, an island in the Rhine, not far from Mainz, is also said to have been a favourite resort of Charlemagne for the purposes of fishing ; a recreation in which, as it has been already stated, he took great delight. Among the current traditions respecting that potentate which crowd on the inquirer at every step in this part of the Rhenish land, is the one which succeeds ; and which purports to explain a part of the history of a family long famous in the genealogy of German houses—the ancient and noble race of Swan. It runs thus in the most approved versions :—

GERHARD SWAN AND THE COUNTESS OF CLEVES.

One day as Charlemagne stood musing at the door of his pavilion, on the island of Ingelheim, looking over the broad and bounding Rhine, he was aware of a large white swan, which drew after it a light boat, containing a noble knight, and which slowly approached the shore near where the tent stood. The knight was armed at all points, *cap-à-pie*, and had a golden chain around his neck, from which depended a written paper. The swan touched the shore, and the knight sprang from the boat. He then made for the pavilion ; on which the swan and boat swam to the centre of the stream, and were soon lost to sight.

“ Go,” said the king to Navilon, or Nibelung, one of his most trusty knights, “ meet you yon stranger, and bring him hither.”

Navilon went forth without delay to obey the king’s behest.

“ You are welcome to Ingelheim pavilion,” said he to the stranger knight, as he reached him his hand ; “ the kaiser would fain converse with you.”

They entered the presence of the mighty monarch ; the stranger stood before Charlemagne ; Navilon stood at his side.

" Sir Knight," said the emperor, " I would know thy name : Say it to me."

But the stranger spake not. He only shook his head mournfully ; and pointed to the paper which hung from his neck by the chain of gold.

" Take it, Navilon," said Charlemagne, " and let my chancellor decipher it on the moment."

Navilon summoned Eginhardt ; and the scholar explained the contents of the paper. They were simply these :

" I, Gerhard Swan, seek service with the mighty emperor Charlemagne, to win broad lands and a beautiful bride."

" I take the proffer," said the emperor, " and I shall reward you according to your desert."

The stranger knight bowed, and placed his hand on his heart.

" Now, to the banquet!" exclaimed the monarch.

Navilon assisted the stranger to divest himself of his heavy armour ; and then clothed him in a rich purple cloak presented to him by the emperor. This done, they adjourned to the great hall of the palace.

" Who is yon stranger knight?" said Roland, the emperor's valiant nephew, as they all took their seats at table.

" God hath sent him hither," replied Charlemagne ; " he is in my service."

" He seems a true knight," said the noble Roland.

" He is so," replied the emperor : " and I would that you treat him well."

" Truly, it shall be so," was the answer of the valiant hero, whose deeds will never die.

Gerhard Swan soon learned to speak. He was a wise and a prudent man, and pleased every one, particularly the emperor, whom he served long and well. His reward was the emperor's own sister, Adelis, or Elisa, as a wife, and the broad duchy of Ardennes as a dowry with her.

Whither he came no one ever knew, save, perhaps, the emperor ; but it is believed that he was one of the Swan family,

whose origin is still a mystery to the dwellers on the shores of the Lower Rhine.

On the death of Adelis, his beloved wife, Gerhard Swan, being still a young man, went forth to woo another bride, with the consent of the mighty Emperor Charlemagne: and this is what befel him in the search of that adventure; as well as what occurred to him in the subsequent part of his life.

In the casement of her bower, silent, sad, and lonely, sat the fair Beatrix, the young and beautiful countess of Cleves. She gazed sorrowfully on the broad and bounding Rhine, which then flowed close beneath the walls of her splendid castle; and mingled her pearly tears with the waters of the river. She had been recently deprived of her tender mother by a brief illness; and it was long since news had reached her of her sire, who had gone to Saxony—a crusader—when she was a child, and never after returned. An orphan now, the fountains of her heart gushed over with grief for her bereavement: she felt she was in the world by herself—a being, helpless, unprotected, and alone. It was summer-tide; a calm, lovely evening in summer. As far as the eye could reach, all was still, on the stream, and on the shore, and in the sky. Not a barque ruffled the smooth surface of the river; not a single wanderer was seen on its banks; the very swallows seemed at rest, for not even a bird flitted across the face of the heavens. The solitude was so oppressive to the young countess that she could repress her feelings no longer; a flood of tears came to her relief, and she sobbed aloud in the sadness of her heart, wailing her irreparable loss, and the desolateness of her condition. While thus occupied, on raising her eyes from the river she became aware of a brave barque, with all its sails set, on the edge of the horizon, bearing down with the course of the current towards the castle. Her heart leaped within her, she knew not why; she was glad, she wist not wherefore. The barque neared her by degrees; and she had quickly an opportunity of scanning it to her full satisfaction. Nearer and nearer it approached the castle; and it soon came so close that she could distinctly see all within it and

without. From the foreyard-arm glanced the form of a golden swan, glittering brightly in the beams of the setting sun ; on the main-mast head hung a shield with the same elegant device richly emblazoned on it. A tall knight of noble mien and handsome countenance stood like a statue on the fore-deck, gazing earnestly on the countess. The barque kept on its course until it came directly opposite the castle. Then it suddenly tacked about and put in for the shore. Beatrix saw nothing further ; for she had retreated from the window the moment the stranger knight sprang lightly on the green sward which then decked the margin of the river. Musing deeply on what the meaning of this occurrence might be, she paced slowly up and down her apartment. Her mind misgave her, yet she felt no pain ; her heart anticipated something undefinable and unusual, yet she seemed pleased with its forebodings. This reverie was broken in upon by a favourite attendant, who came to announce that the stranger knight, just landed, waited to communicate something of importance to her. She bade him to her presence. He entered. She received him with a blushing countenance, and a throbbing heart. Never before had she seen a knight of such a princely port ; never before had she seen so handsome a man as this welcome visitor appeared to her imagination. The first sparks of love were kindled in her ingenuous bosom ; the fire was ready to burst forth at the earliest opportunity. He told her his name was Gerhard Swan ; that he had been to Saxony as a champion of the cross ; that he came recently from the North Sea, where he had met with her father ; and that he had been commissioned by him to inform her of his intention never again to return to the Rhine, as he had devoted himself to the service of Christ, in that dreary land, for the remainder of his mortal existence. In pursuance of that commission, and in performance of the promise he had made the old count, he said that he waited on her the first on his arrival in Rhein-land. Beatrix was perplexed : joy and sorrow struggled in her mind for the mastery. Grief that she should no more see her remaining parent—that she should never again behold her beloved father, filled her gentle heart ; yet was she not wholly inconsolable, for she felt that this noble knight might now be all to her—father, husband, friend, protector, every thing dearest and most endeared in the

world. He tried to soothe her : and he was successful. Before night fell they were deep in each other's affections.

Gerhard Swan remained three days at the castle of Cleves. In that time he told her all he knew of her father, and much of himself and of his own adventures in Saxony. On the evening of the third day, as they sat together alone in her bower, he reached her a sealed letter in her father's handwriting.

"Read this, beautiful Beatrix," said he, "and then say whether I shall stay here longer, or leave you to-morrow for ever."

Beatrix blushed as she broke the seal ; but she blushed still more as she perused the contents. Brief, but pithy, it went at once to the point. It was thus couched :—

"BEATRIX,—If the knight, Gerhard Swan, win thy love, I bestow thee on him as his bride. He is every way worthy of thee."

Her heart was his already ; why then should her tongue gainsay her heart ? She cast down her eyes, blushed still more deeply than before, and reached him her hand. The following week they were married with all the pomp and ceremony which beseemed such an occasion. Peace and pleasure followed their espousal ; for they were both pious, and good to the poor. Their happiness was also crowned by Providence, with the birth of three sons in succession, whom they named Dietrich, Gottfried, and Conrad. When the boys had grown to man's estate, Gerhard, now mature in years, called them together ; and, in the presence of their mother, and his numerous vassals and retainers, made the following disposition of his property and possessions among them. To Dietrich, his first-born, he gave his shield and sword, and chief title ; and then named him to his feudatories as his successor in the county of Cleves. Gottfried, the second, had the horn, which hung from his baldric,—then an emblem of high dignity,—and the county of Louvain. The third, Conrad, held his sire's signet-ring, and the county of Hesse. In a few days after this settlement of his affairs, Gerhard Swan disappeared from the castle without the cognisance of any one. On the table of a private chamber,

his inconsolable countess, Beatrix, found the following lines written in a hand almost illegible from agitation and tears:—

“BEATRIX,—A solemn vow compels me to return to Saxony to thy sire—never more to quit it. I leave you a memento in our three brave boys; and I take along with me, treasured in my inmost heart, their images, and your true love. Adieu.”

Beatrix fell a prey to the deepest dejection; a settled melancholy sate on her spirits. Whole days would she sit in the casement of the bower from whence she had first beheld her Gerhard, and look out anxiously over the broad expanse of the river, as though she expected to see him once again. But she looked in vain—he never returned more. Many and many a day went and came,—many and many a barque passed and repassed the castle,—but neither brought back her husband. She soon found that even hope had fled her heart for ever. It was not long till death put a period to her sorrow, and released her from the agonising pangs of suspense.

In commemoration of this event the castle of Cleves was thereafter called Schwanenburg; and even now a gilt swan serves as a vane on one of its principal towers.

BIBERICH.

Biberich is about a league distant from Mainz, on the right bank of the Rhine; and the Grand Duke of Nassau-Usingen resides in the palace attached to it, which also bears the same name. This palace is beautifully situated, lying almost on the water's edge—the road only intervening between it and the river. It is a very handsome modern edifice, containing several capital apartments, and having extensive and well-arranged pleasure-grounds in the rear. The old Burg of Mosbach stands in the garden, presenting an excellent specimen of an ancient castle in good preservation.

Biberich palace was built in the beginning of the eighteenth century, by George Augustus, duke of Nassau; and the subsequent tradition bears reference to the period shortly succeeding its erection.

CONFERENCE OF THE DEAD.

A Grand Duchess of Nassau lay dead in the palace of Biberich. She lay in state, as be seemed her rank, upon the ducal bed, canopied with black velvet; the state chamber being hung with black, and the large room lighted up by a countless crowd of wax tapers. A captain and forty-nine men of the Grand Duke's body-guard, did duty, as a guard of honour, in the great hall of the palace, adjacent to which was the apartment in which lay the corpse of the deceased duchess. All the menials and retainers of the palace were enveloped in deep mourning.

It was midnight;—the midnight of the day on which this lamented lady had died: and the captain of the guard stood at the palace gate to breathe for a moment the free air of heaven. As he stood thus he became aware of the approach of a chariot drawn by six horses, which rushed down the road like a whirlwind, and stopped at the portal of the palace. A lady, garbed in white, then stepped forth from the vehicle, and approached the spot where the captain stood, making as though she would pass him and enter the palace.

"It may not be, my lady," the captain spake peremptorily, but with much politeness. "My orders are strict: you cannot pass."

"But, sir captain," replied his fair antagonist, "an it please you, I must pass. I claim to enter by virtue of my right as first lady of the bed-chamber to the late duchess."

She put aside her veil as she spoke; and the captain, knowing her at once to be that which she described herself, offered no further opposition. She then entered the palace; passed through the great hall; and went into the chamber of death.

"What can she want with the corpse at this strange hour of the night?" said the captain to his ancient, or lieutenant. "What may she desire?"

"Nay," replied the ancient, "I know not. But why not look and see?"

"A good thought," quoth the captain, "and see I will if I can."

The curious captain then approached the door of the chamber of death on tip-toe : it lay at the end of a little passage from the great hall in which he held guard ; and applying his eye to the key-hole, as softly as possible, he peeped through and beheld——

“ Oh, heaven ! Come hither ! come hither ! ” he cried, pale with affright, and breathless with the eagerness of communication, the while he retreated from the chamber door, and beckoned his ancient towards him. “ Look ! Look ! ”

The ancient looked through the key-hole also ; and, like his captain, too, came back the very image of terror. One after another the soldiers took the same liberty, and manifested the same panic fear.

But what did they see to cause them such dread ?—They saw the dead duchess sitting up in the state bed on which she lay ; they saw her pale lips move as though she conversed with the lady companion who stood beside her : they saw that companion, wan as a corpse, clothed in the cerements of the grave, and they beheld her lips move also ; but they could catch no distinct speech of either, a low hollow sound alone being audible, like that preternatural noise which is heard in the woods, when a storm is brewing afar off in the heavens.

In due course the awful visitor came forth from the chamber of death, and passed again through the great hall, on her way to the palace gate to resume her place in her chariot. It was the captain's duty, as well as imperative on him in point of gallantry, to hand her to her carriage ; and, although his hair stood on end at the idea of touching her who had so recently held communion with a corpse, he did not shrink from performing it. He took her hand ; it felt like a lump of ice ; he placed her in her chariot ; the odours of the grave breathed from her lips as she bade him adieu. The coal-black barbs snorted ; the dark-visaged postilions cracked their long whips ; the word to proceed passed from the pale dame within. Off went the chariot like lightning ; and like lightning it was in sight no longer than a single moment. In that moment, however, the captain had sufficient time to see sparks of fire, volumes of smoke, and sheets of flame, bursting forth from the nostrils of the horses, enveloping the rattling

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MAINZ.

445

wheels of the vehicle, and keeping pace with it in its rapid progress.

The next morning, ere the captain and his men had an opportunity to communicate this singular occurrence to the Grand Duke, intelligence arrived at the palace that the first lady of the bed-chamber to the late duchess had died in the preceding night at twelve o'clock ; it was supposed of sorrow for the loss of her beloved mistress.

MAINZ.

“Mainz,” says Vogt,* “if not the principal city of the Roman power on the Upper Rhine, was, undoubtedly, the principal fortress of that mighty people.” Local antiquarians trace its origin as anterior to the first invasion of the Romans, and derive its name from the Celtic word “Mag,” adopted as a prefix by the conquerors ; but it is most probable that it had no existence before the time of Cæsar, and that the entrenched camp of Martius Agrippa, one of the early generals of Augustus, was the first foundation of the future city.

Drusus Germanicus, who succeeded in the command of the Roman legions on the Rhine, erected the *castrum*, or fortress of Magontiacum, on the site of the encampment of Agrippa—that is to say, very nearly on the ground now occupied by Mainz ; built a stone bridge, the piers of which are still visible over the river ; raised a *tête du pont* at Castellum, on the site of the present Cassell, whence the name of the latter ; flanked his position with several strongly fortified towers on the surrounding points of elevation and command ; and, finally, erected a magnificent aqueduct to convey water from Fontheim to the newly established colony,—a work of unnecessary expense, it would appear, considering that the Rhine was so close at hand. The monument now existent in the citadel, known as the Eichelstein, or Acorn, is of this era, or a little later : and so likewise are the remains of the aqueduct already alluded to near Zahlbach, in the vicinity.

The twenty-second legion, which had been engaged under Titus in the conquest of Judea and the destruction of Jerusalem,

* Rheinische, Sag. u. Gesch. b. 1, s. 43.

was stationed at Mainz, A.D. 70; and Crescentius, one of the first preachers of the Christian faith on the Rhine, it is stated, was a centurion in it. This pious man is uniformly described in local history as the pupil of St. Peter; and he has always been known as the first bishop of Mainz. He is said to have suffered martyrdom under the reign of Trajan, A.D. 108.

That the Christian religion was widely spread in Germany in the third and fourth centuries, there are the traditions of the people, and the acts of several councils of the church, to shew; and that, even at this early period, Mainz was among the most believing cities of the Roman empire there is incontestable authority to prove. Alexander Severus was murdered here by his own soldiers; it is said by some, because of his attachment to the new faith; but with greater probability, by others, because of the rigour of his military discipline, and the displeasure which it caused in his licentious army, A.D. 238.

The famous vision of Constantine—the cross in the sky—previously alluded to in these pages,* is believed to have been seen at Mainz as that Christian conqueror went forth to meet the forces of Maxentius; and grave historians, Vogt for instance, are to be found who give this tradition implicit credence. The field of the “Holy Cross” in the vicinity of this city is still pointed out as the spot where this miracle took place; and there are very few among the thousands who dwell in Mainz that do not implicitly receive it as the true locality of the occurrence.

Julian, known by the opprobrious and unjust name of the Apostate, made himself master of Mainz in the first of his three expeditions against the rebellious Alemanni; and retained it as a strong position until his death. It is of this period of the history of that great prince and remarkable man, that Gibbon thus speaks in his magniloquent manner:†—“The consternation of the Germans after the battle of Strasburg (A.D. 357–359) encouraged him to the first attempt; and the reluctance of the troops soon yielded to the persuasive eloquence of a leader who shared the fatigues and dangers which he imposed upon his meanest soldiers. The villages on either side of the Meyn (Main), which were plentifully stored with corn and cattle, felt

* Vide vol. i. § Sinzig, pp. 364, 365.

† Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, cap. xix.

the ravages of an invading army. The principal houses, constructed with some imitation of Roman elegance, were consumed by the flames ; and the Cæsar boldly advanced about ten miles, till his progress was stopped by a dark and impenetrable forest, undermined by subterranean passages, which threatened with secret snares and ambush every step of the assailant. The ground was already covered with snow ; and Julian, after repairing an ancient castle which had been erected by Trajan, granted a truce of ten months to the submissive barbarians." This ancient castle stood on the Main-spitze, or tongue of land lying between the Rhine and the Mainz, commanding entirely the navigation of the latter river ; and subsequently became a royal abode for the Carlovignian race of emperors of Germany, under the name of Kûfstein. It has been long since demolished ; and no traces of its site are now discernible. The historian of the Rhine, a most implicit Christian, and somewhat of a bigot by consequence, says, that not a century since a hymn was chanted in the cathedral of Mainz, on the anniversary of Saint Mercurius, which had for its burden the laudation of that celestial being for having, by means of a flash of lightning, avenged the cause of the cross upon the apostate Emperor in the East.*

The death of Julian, however, was the most disastrous event that could then occur in the civilised world : for no sooner were the barbarous people of the North aware that he no longer lived, than they broke at once the bounds which the fear of his arms and the fame of his valour had prescribed to them, and overran with their myriad hosts, and their horrid habits, the whole of southern Europe. Within less than half a century of that lamentable occurrence, the Rhine was crossed by the Wenden or West Goths, under the command of Kroch, their king, on their way to Italy, through the fertile and flourishing province of Gaul ; and by the Huns, under Attila. They passed the river by the bridge at Mainz, and left behind them traces of the fearful devastation which uniformly marked the course of these barbarians. Of the ravages of the former horde

* He gives two lines of this curious composition, which run thus :—

“ Tu Cæsaris ter impii
Vindex beate Mercuri !—

Oh Saint Mercury ! ”

of barbarians in Mainz, and of the savage cruelties and wanton destruction inflicted on that city and its inhabitants by them, there are still extant the testimony of a contemporary writer, who will not, it is trusted, be esteemed the less veracious because he has been canonised as a saint by the church.* “Mainz” (or rather *Maguntiacum*), he says, “heretofore so proud and so excellent in its edifices, was surrounded and taken by the barbarians; and many thousand Christians were, on that occasion, murdered, even in the churches to which they had fled for refuge and safety.”

The history of Mainz, for more than two centuries subsequently, is but the history of the Roman empire; sharing, as it did, in all its reverses, and participating in its decay.

About the middle of the seventh century, Sidonius, then bishop of Mainz, collected together the scattered remnant of the inhabitants of that city, and began its restoration. Dagobert the Second, king of the West Franks, gave him great assistance in this laudable design; and sent him some of his most skilful artisans to erect churches for the citizens. On that occasion, the site of Mainz was changed; the new city being built on the margin of the river, at the foot of the gentle elevation on which the *Maguntiacum* of Drusus was erected. Betheora, daughter of Theutbert the Second, king of the West Franks, sometime predecessor to Dagobert (A. D. 612), it should be said, was also a great benefactor to Mainz; so likewise was Bilehilde, the daughter of Dagobert. The latter, on the demise of her husband, Hettan, duke of Thuringia, or rather sovereign of the East Franks, who fell in battle, abandoned his principality and people by stealth, took up her abode in Mainz, in a convent built by her for the purpose of a refuge, and, on her death, bequeathed all her worldly possessions to the diocess.

But the real revivification of this large and important city took place under the Carlovignian dynasty of the Frankish sovereigns; and the great head of that dynasty, Charlemagne, may be truly said to have given it a new being, in bestowing on Boniface, as bishop, the ecclesiastical see, and making it a distinct and independent spiritual principality. The proximity,

* St. Hilary, in a Letter to his fair friend Ageruchia.

too, of the favourite abode of that monarch, the proud palace of Ingelheim, contributed greatly to enhance the power and increase the importance of Mainz. The world knows all that can now be known of Charlemagne; but few know that his coadjutor, Boniface, the apostle of Germany, his fellow-labourer in the vineyard of Christianity, his associate in the extension of all the civilisation then current without the limits of the Roman empire—was a Briton. Charlemagne, it is related, threw a bridge over the Rhine, on the foundation of the piers of the stone structure erected by Drusus, and repaired by Julian: and thus once more opened a direct communication between Mainz and the heart of Germany. The prudence of Boniface, his great piety, and the well-merited esteem in which he was held by the emperor, laid the basis of all that future greatness which made the archbishops of Mainz, his successors, not alone the first among the spiritual dignitaries of the church, but also the chief among the temporal princes of the state.

This greatness, however, was not carried to its fullest extent until the time of Hatto, the first bishop of that name, so well known in legend and tradition, but so ill known in true history, A.D. 891–913. He it was who, through favour of the contemporary king, and the ability for government which he displayed, succeeded in placing the prelacy before the first temporal principality of the empire; and in obtaining for the prelate a position in the state second only to that of the sovereign.

A century subsequent to the death of Hatto, another prelate, remarkable also for his great powers of governing, arose from the lowliest condition, and filled with the highest advantage to the principality, the episcopal throne of Mainz (A.D. 997–1011). This was Willigis, the son of a wheelwright. To him it was that the citizens of Mainz owed their best and dearest privileges: and the period of his rule is deservedly reckoned as the golden age of their city. Yet was he not exempt from the usual fate of merit and greatness: he was envied by those who could not emulate him; and he found that goodness hath ever the worst detractors to deal with. The continuous theme of his enemies was the lowliness of his birth,—a high crime in Germany at all times, but more especially so in those days: and

it is said, that one morning, in the earlier part of his reign, he found written, not alone in his own house, but on every wall in the city, a bitter and offensive distich reminding him of his humble origin. This circumstance, however, he turned to good account, as a clever man always will do; by adopting as his arms a white wheel, on a red ground,—to make it the more conspicuous—as the arms of the state; and by appending to it, as his own motto, the obnoxious couplet.*

The history of Mainz, for a long period subsequently, has no distinct identity; being intimately mixed up with the history of the German empire; and uniformly found partaking in most or all of the mutations which ensued in its condition. While industry and enlightenment progressed, this city progressed with them in prosperity and power; and although, perhaps, from that circumstance, the burghers will be found factious, and the common people prone to riot, still it will be also found that Mainz was mostly in the lead of civilisation. One thing, however, is certain—as long as the world exists, humanity will owe to its citizens some of the best blessings ever bestowed upon our common nature. For was not printing invented by John Gensfleisch or Guttemburg? and did not Arnold von Thurn set on foot the Confederation of the Rhine, which not only destroyed the robber-bands that infested the country, and cramped all intercourse, but likewise laid the foundations of that extraordinary and most admirable commercial league—the Hans Towns Confederacy?

In the early part of the eleventh century, Mainz was the

* Merian (Top. Archd. Mogunt. Trevir. Colon.) gives this motto, as a Latin pentameter, telling the same story of it as above:—

“*Willigis recolas, quis es, et unde venis.*”

But Vogt (Rheinische, Gesch. u. Sag.) and Bange (Thuringische Chronik) give it as a German distich. In the former it runs thus:—

“Willigis! Willigis!
Deiner Herkunft nicht vergiss;”

while the latter has it as follows:—

“Willigis! Willigis!
Denk woher du kommen sis.”

Both are substantially of the same signification.

scene of an election to the empire ; and a more singular and extraordinary concurrence cannot well be imagined than ensued on that interesting and important occasion. It will not detract from the dignity of local history, to detail, in the verse of one of the ablest national poets, the circumstances of this striking ceremony ; prefacing its introduction, however, and concluding it by a few explanatory observations, in plain prose, on the point of general history with which it is connected.

ELECTION OF CONRAD THE SECOND.

Henry, the second emperor of Germany of that name, terminated his toilsome and most unhappy life in the castle of Grone, at Leingau, in Hanover, A. D. 1024. He died childless ; and with him became extinct the last scion of the Saxon dynasty, which gave five monarchs to the German empire, and governed it during a space of 105 years—A. D. 919–1024.

That the empire might not fall an immediate and unresisting prey to the covetous foes which bounded it on all sides, it was necessary, not alone to proceed at once to the election of a new emperor, but that the nation's choice should also be a man of tried firmness and known ability. Among the host of candidates for the purple, there were two who far exceeded all their competitors in the requisite qualifications : they were first cousins, sons of two brothers, of an ancient and noble Franconian or Salique family, bearing the same name, and boasting the same dignity. The election lay between them for a long while : but the age—and the age alone—of the elder decided it in his favour : so well matched were they in merit, and so equal were their pretensions in the eyes of the German people. The new emperor was named Conrad the Second.

The following passage, descriptive of that election, will be read with interest. It is a versified, but, at the same time, almost a literal translation from a tragedy by one of the greatest German dramatic poets in existence ;* and, it is hoped, will well repay the perusal. No other language but the German, or, more properly speaking, the Teutonic, could tolerate a literal version

* Ernst von Schwaben, ein Trauerspiel, in fünf Acten, von Uhland.

—*verbum et verbo*—into English, without much injuring the meaning of the original.

The pious emperor, Henry, was no more —
He the last scion of that Saxon stock,
Which, gloriously, a century, had governed.
And as the news went forth to the empire,
A busy spirit stirred within all men,
And a new era seemed to dawn upon them :
Again awoke each deeply slumbering wish ;
And hopes, and high anticipations, dormant long.
It was not wondrous more, that German men
Who ne'er ascended erst so high in thought,
Should each, in secret, scan his chance to rule.
For, by the ancient laws, it might occur
That he who one day held the sovereign's stirrup,
The next, mayhap, the saddle sat himself.
No longer deemed these free folk of their craft ;
And spake no more of field, or house affairs ;
Nor market minded, nor for culture cared :
No, stately, armed from head to heel, they throng
Forth from each homestead, singly or in troops,
Unto the field of May, the election's scene,
On the Rhine shore, full near to noble Mainz.
Where, infinite, on either side, the plains
Stretch i' the distance, there they took their stand —
A mighty mass : for city's walls might not,
Wide though their compass, hold the German people.
On the right bank, beneath their teeming tents,
The Saxons lay : beside, the Slavish hordes ;
The eastern Franks ; the Suabian ; the Bavarian :
Along the left the Rhenish Franks were ranged ;
The men of upper and of low Lorraine.
The pith and marrow of the realm were there.
In mid-camp of each folk that gathered there,
Heaved its proud head, the prince or chief's pavilion.
Oh, but among that crowd was greeting warm !

And hearty hand-shakes, and most joyful meetings !
And every race, though various, there combined,
Differing in face, in form, in speech, in customs ;
Differing in horses, arms, and modes of warfare ;
Differing in all—but there a band of brothers—
United stood t' accomplish one great end,
That end the same to those who dwelt in tents,
Or lay i' the thicket, or, from the island's creeks,
Came forth in crowds—a free and fair election !
From out that mighty throng were chosen few,
And from those few were two alone selected :
Both Franks—both princes of a princely race—
Sons of two brothers—brothers they in name—
Brothers in glory too—the Conrads twain.

On a hill's side, i' the circle of the chiefs,
To the far crowd full visible, stood forth
These two, selected by the concrete voice
Of the free German folk, as fit to rule them,
Before the best that gave its broad soil birth ;
The worthiest of the worthy in its bounds :
But each unto the other so much equal,
That further might the election not proceed,
So nearly were their high pretensions balanced.
And there they stood—each with his high head bowed,
His glance o' the ground, his cheek like maiden's glowing,
O'ercome by the proud consciousness of worth.
It was in sooth a regal sight to see ;
And many a bearded man wept to behold it.
And there around these princes thronging stood,
Breathless and stirless all, that countless crowd—
So still that the ripple of the Rhine was heard
As onward rolled its slow, majestic waters.
For dare might none to voice for this or that ;
Or think to turn the even, well-poised scale,
Without to injure t' other, or to stir
Up discord, or to sow the seeds of hate.
As thus they stood, on sudden, both the princes
Joined hands, and clasped, and kiss'd right heartily ;

And then embraced, as brothers fond might do :
 Clear signal this that neither harboured hate ;
 Then each to th' other willingly gave place.
 On which stood forth the throng th' Archbishop of Mainz,
 And spake aloud :—“ Well, then, since one we must,
 Be it the elder.” Thrice ten thousand tongues—
 Prince, peer, and peasant—thundered their acclaim :
 None joyfuller than that o' the younger Conrad,
 Echoed the loud applause of this free choice.
 Then stooping from his height the emperor
 Grasp'd fond and faithfully his cousin's hand,
 And gently drew him to his side o' the throne.
 This done, within the princely circle trode
 The widowed empress, gentle Kunigund,
 Who, greeting gravely the new ruler, gave
 Into his hands the ensigns of empire.
 The chiefs then formed into a festal throng,
 Their emperor surrounding joyfully ;
 The crowd and clergy hymning came behind :
 Such shouts heard never Heaven in one day !
 E'en from his tomb had Charlemagne arose,
 More gratefully he could not well be greeted.
 Thus sped they onward, stream adown, to Mainz —
 Where, 'neath its high cathedral's holy roof,
 With the blessed chrism Conrad was anointed.
 Though who the popular voice so high hath cited,
 Fails not in aught that man derives from heaven !
 And as he forth amidst his subjects trode,
 Then seemed he as he were increased in stature ;
 And overtopped the tallest in the crowd,
 That hailed, and blessed, and thronging pressed around him.

A brief and rapid review of the career of this emperor (Conrad the Second) may not be irrelevant in this place.

The result of his reign did not disappoint the hopes of those who had elected him to the empire. His cousin, Conrad the Salique, with a magnanimity rather unusual in defeated ambition, at once took the oath of allegiance to him ; and, what was more, he kept it inviolate all through his lifetime. The whole of Conrad's

career was marked by the most signal successes. He suppressed a strong disposition to engage in a servile war, which had manifested itself among the vassals of the higher nobility ; he reconciled the conflicting interests of the greater nobles, and put an end to the depredations of the petty ones ; he traversed the empire doing justice to all ; and he never ceased to labour until he had established peace, order, and law, in its remotest provinces. He then undertook a journey to Rome (A.D. 1026), where he speedily suppressed the French party, which would fain have conferred the sovereignty of Italy on Robert, king of France ; and, together with his Empress Guda, received there the imperial crown in the ancient church of St. Peter, at the hands of the reigning pontiff, John the Nineteenth, A. D. 1027. From Rome he went to Milan, where he settled the affairs of Lombardy, then in a very disturbed state. The Normans, at this period, were masters of Apuglia, Calabria, and all that part of southern Italy, exclusive of Sicily, known to the ancients as Græcia Major ; and Conrad's policy induced him to strengthen the hands of these intruders against the Eastern emperors, whose sovereignty in these parts they had usurped. Ronulf, their leader, received a large amount of assistance from him. With Canute the Great, king of Denmark and England, then in Italy on a pilgrimage to Rome, he formed a lasting friendship ;* and also concluded a matrimonial alliance between his own son and successor, Henry the Third, and the daughter of the Danish monarch, Chiunelinde, by which the mark, or marquisate, of Schleswig, in Holstein, was detached from Denmark, and the River Oder fixed on as the boundary line between that kingdom and Germany. With a rare prudence and forethought, he drew closer than ever the bonds of union between the empire and Burgundy ;† so that at the demise of Rudolf the Third (A.D. 1032) the greatest portion of that fertile country—including Provence, Dauphiné, Franche Comte, Lyons, Savoy, together with a part of Switzerland—fell to Germany. Marseilles and Toulon were at that time German cities. A war with the Hungarians and Poles, in which he was subsequently engaged

* Herrmann's Allg. Weltgeschichte.—Sechster Zeitraum, England.

† Burgundy at this period was divided into two kingdoms. Rudolf was ruler of Upper Burgundy, which included Provence.

(A. D. 1035), terminated in his complete success: not, however, until these barbarous nations had entirely devastated the tract of country lying between the Elbe and the Oder, and reduced the then flourishing city of Hamburg to ashes. To his immortal honour he established the ceremony of "God-peace"* in the empire; by which it was made criminal against the church, and a deadly offence of an unpardonable character against the state, to prosecute any feud between the evening of Wednesday and the morning of Monday in any week. In a spirit of political sagacity, which would have shone transcendently even in a more enlightened era, he laboured to destroy the unseemly power of the greater vassals of the empire, by raising the smaller feudatories to a state of independence they had never known before; and by conferring on them certain privileges, until then enjoyed alone by the principal fief-holders. The mode he took was the effectual one of making their feofs hereditary, instead of leaving them, as they were before, solely held for the life of the feoffee. A second journey which he undertook to Rome (A. D. 1036) was not so fortunate for him as the first; for the greater part of his troops perished of a contagious disease, and he himself barely escaped with life. He never after recovered the shock his constitution then sustained; for, at the end of three years of lingering painfulness, ill health, and uncertainty, he died at Utrecht (A. D. 1039), too soon for his country's good, but late enough for his own glory. He was one of the greatest emperors that ever governed Germany. His son Henry the Third succeeded him.

In the fourteenth century Mainz had attained to the highest pinnacle of its power and glory; the Rhenish Confederation being then in full force; and this city standing at the head of the confederacy. The fifteenth century saw the art of printing take rise within its walls, and expand its powers out to the ends of the earth. In the servile war which followed the Reformation, however, and in the fierce feuds which ensued between the Count Diether von Isenburg, archbishop of the see, and Adolph Count of Nassau, his competitor for that dignity long previously to this event (A. D. 1461-75), Mainz suffered so much that it has never

* "Der Gottesfrieden."

since recovered its pristine splendour. But, perhaps, the greatest injuries it ever received was in the siege which it sustained in 1688, by the French, at the command of Louis the Fourteenth; and in the second siege by the republican armies of France, at the period of the first revolution of that people. On both these occasions, the troops of that nation, in the wanton spirit of destruction which usually characterises them in their incursions into an enemy's country, committed crimes against national prejudice, and violated national feelings to an extent which has never been forgotten, and which never will be forgiven: for they not only desecrated the churches, and broke open the sanctuaries of the dead, but they also abused the monuments and even the remains of all those great men whom the German people hold in such high and well-deserved reverence. Little did Louis the Fourteenth, as a sensible writer remarks, "imagine at the time that his myrmidons committed these acts of barbarism in Mainz, that, not more than a century afterwards, the tombs of his own ancestors, and his own descendants—the monuments of his children and his progenitors—would be treated in the same manner in his own kingdom, and by the offspring of these his own subjects. *Discite justitiam.*"*

In the general partition, which followed the peace of 1815, Mainz remained in the power of the Grand Duke of Hesse Darmstadt, with whom it still continues.

THE CATHEDRAL.

One of the principal objects of curiosity in Mainz is the *Dom Kirche*, or cathedral. It presents, according to the best local authorities extant, specimens of four different styles of architecture, each illustrative of the era in which it prevailed; the structure having been upwards of four hundred years in the course of completion. The east choir and its entrance are of the tenth century; the nave of the eleventh; the west choir of the century succeeding; and the chapels along the side aisles of the early part of the fourteenth century. There are two massive brazen doors leading into the church from the market-place, on which is inscribed the Magna Charta of Mainz: these doors,

* Vogt. Rhein. Gesch. u. Sag.

and the privileges conferred by that charter, were the gift of Willigis, the archbishop, to the citizens (A. D. 1000), during his administration of the principality and archdiocese. In the various chapels which are to be found along both sides of the church, many sumptuous monuments and richly decorated altars may be met with; but there is much more interest attached to two plain tombs and to one lowly altar than to all the "boast of heraldry, the pomp of power," by which the others are beset, and with which all are bedizened. These tombs are those of Fastrada, the first wife of Charlemagne; and Heinrich von Meissen, better known as Frauenlob, the chief of the Minnesänger, or German troubadours, of whom more in the sequel. The altar is that on which stood the miraculous image alluded to in the following legend.

THE POOR FIDDLER.

Among the miraculous curiosities of the cathedral of Mainz, "ages long ago," was a figure of the Virgin, on the feet of which the devotion of some wealthy votary had placed a pair of solid gold slippers. Of that image tradition has preserved the tale which succeeds :—

On a bitter winter morning a poor, aged, miserable fiddler, after playing unsuccessfully through the streets of Mainz, entered the cathedral for the purpose of pouring out his simple story of sorrow and distress in the presence of his Maker. His prayer was chanted in a rude, rhyming metre, composed by himself; and it was so generally sang to the accompaniment of his cracked instrument, that even in addressing himself to Heaven, he could not overcome the habit he had acquired of using it to excite the compassion of his fellow-men. It ran thus :—

It freezes so, I feel so faint,
So hungry, and so old;
And none will pity on me take,
Or shelter me from cold!

It was not thus in years long past,
Then praise and pay I had;
For when my merry fiddle played,
Its tones made all hearts glad.

Now gray and bent, I go alone,
No more to please I can ;
I try, folk say, " Put up that tool,
Thou old and silly man."

There was much more to the same effect ; but this specimen, it is presumed, will suffice.

As he prayed and sang, he looked around and saw that the church was quite empty. It was a perfect solitude ; for the side of the stove in the warm habitations of opulent Mainz, was much preferred to the foot of the altar, even by those chosen vessels of the Lord, the ladies. And the old man said within himself, that as there was no one to observe him, he would play the lovely Virgin a tune on his violin, and sing her one of his best songs. No sooner said than done. He played and sang with so much fervour and delight, that it seemed to him as though the days of his youth had returned ; and as if life was again green, and gay, and joyful with the beautiful hues of human spring-time. Once more he knelt down on its conclusion ; and, offering another short prayer, he rose to depart. But as he arose, lo and behold ! the image before which he knelt, and in whose honour he had exercised his humble calling, lift up its left foot, and by a dexterous movement kicked the golden slipper which covered it into the old fiddler's ragged bosom.

" This is a miracle," soliloquised he ; " the Blessed Virgin knows how to pay a poor devil who amuses her."

Filled with gratitude and delight he warmly thanked the giver, and then went forth into the market to find a sale for his treasure. He was a prey to hunger,—he had not tasted food for a full day and night,—and he had no other alternative than to part with the gift which seemed bestowed on him for the sole purpose of appeasing it. A goldsmith to whom he offered it for its value at once recognised it ; and in a few minutes the wretched man was worse off even than before, for he was in the hands of justice. In those days—it was " the age of chivalry"—there was short shrift for any crime, real or imaginary ; the caprice of the judges condemning and executing within a couple of hours at the furthest. But for the heinous crime of sacrilege, with which

the hapless graybeard was charged, there was no hope, no mercy, no respite. A single hour saw him tried, condemned, judged, and on his way to execution. The place appointed for his suffering was the Speise-Markt, just opposite the ancient brazen doors opening into the cathedral. It was in vain that the poor old man told his story—the minions of fortune would not hear it—his judges treated it as an impudent falsehood. He had nothing to hope, they told him; die he must before the mid-day.

“Well, then,” he said, as he stood at the foot of the scaffold, which permanently remained there, that being the usual place of execution; “Well, then, as I must die, even let me pray one prayer, and sing one song to the music of my old fiddle, at the feet of the Virgin. I ask it in her blessed name, and you may not refuse me.”

They did not refuse him. It would be an impiety almost as criminal as the sacrilege of which he was accused, to interpose between a prisoner and the Virgin for the prevention of a dying prayer. Closely guarded, he once more entered the church which had been so fatal to him, and approaching the altar of the Virgin, prayed, and played, and sang as before. When his song was over, to the great horror and dismay of the guards and executioner who surrounded him, the statue raised her right foot, and flung a second slipper—the only one left to it—into the bosom of the old man. All present witnessed it; and none could deny the miraculous interposition of Heaven in his favour. He was at once released from his bondage, and brought to the city council in triumph, where his liberation was duly affirmed.

What became of the slippers is not exactly known; but it is believed that the old fiddler freely surrendered them to the ecclesiastical authorities in lieu of a provision for the remainder of his days; and that those reverend personages, fearful lest the Virgin should be equally extravagant on another occasion, kept them carefully locked up in the treasure-chest of the cathedral. Whether they were fused in the fires of the thirty-years' war; or whether they found an accommodating foot to fit on, during the occupation of Mainz by the French forces, subsequent to

the first revolution of that gay people, history or tradition says nothing satisfactory on the subject.*

FASTRADA.

By the side of the "Beautiful Doorway" leading into the cloisters, stands, worked into the wall of the cathedral, a fragment of the tomb of Fastrada, the fourth wife of that mighty monarch Charlemagne, according to some authorities—the third according to others. This fragment forms only a part of the larger and more magnificent monument erected to her memory by her uxorious husband, in the abbey of St. Alban, but subsequently destroyed; and it is supposed to have been the flat stone which covered her grave, by reason of the inscription which it still bears upon it. The monument itself, according to the Chronicle of Treves, was of white marble, gilt and ornamented with statues in high and low relief. This stone bears the following inscription, which is still legible:—

"Fastradana pia Caroli conjunx vocitata. Christo delecta jacet hoc sub marmore tecta. Anno septingentesimo quarto, quem numerum metro claudere musa negat. Rex pie, quem gessit virgo, licet hic cineriscit spiritus hæres sit patriæ, quæ tristia nescit."

But the Chronicle of Treves states that the original structure bore likewise the inscription which succeeds:—

"Inclita Fastradæ Reginæ hic membra quiescunt,
De medio quam mors rigida flore tulit.
Nobilis ipsa viro conjuncta et jure potenti est:
Sed modo cœlesti nobilior thalamo.
Pars illi melior Carolus Rex ipse remansit,
Cui tradet mitis tempora longa Deus."

That Fastrada was greatly beloved by Charlemagne, there is little doubt; but that she deserved his love, there is still much question among the learned. One writer states, indeed, that her wantonness was the theme of universal condemnation even

* It is curious to observe what a common basis most European, and, perhaps, many Asiatic legends also, have. A story, similar in every respect to this, is told in a MS. volume of very old Spanish poems, never published, now in the possession of the author. It is written in the most ancient form of Castilian metre, used in the romances of that noble tongue—that is to say, the *rima assonante*.

in a court where chastity was not the most prominent virtue ; another alleges that besides being a wanton, she was a witch, a dabbler in the black art, and an associate of infernal spirits ; while a third makes her out a deep political intriguante as well as a social, and ascribes to her agency much of the internal commotion which prevailed in the empire during her lifetime. At this distance of time it is utterly impossible to decide which is the true statement ; and as the facts are not within reach, it is proposed to offer the fabulous to supply their place, in these pages.

When the Kaiser Karl abode at Zurich, says the author of the circumstantial traditions of his reign in the *Rhyning Chronicle*,* he dwelt in a house named 'the Hole,' in front of which he caused a pillar to be erected with a bell on the top of it, to the end that whoever demanded justice should have the means of making himself heard. One day as he sat to dinner in this house, he heard the bell ring ; and he sent his menials to bring the claimant before him : but they could find no one. A second and a third time the bell rung : but no human being was still to be seen. At length the Kaiser himself went forth ; and, lo and behold ! he saw a huge serpent, which had twined itself round the shaft of the pillar, and was then in the very act of pulling the bell-rope.

"This is God's will," said the monarch. "Let the brute be brought before me. I may deny justice to none of God's creatures—man or beast."

The serpent was accordingly ushered into the imperial presence ; and the Kaiser spake to it as he would to one of his own kind, gravely asking what it required. Whereupon the animal made a most courteous reverence to Charlemagne, after the fashion of its tribe ; and signed, in its own way, for him to follow. Follow he did, accordingly, accompanied by his court : and the creature led them on to the water's edge, on the shores of the lake, to the spot where it had its nest. Arrived there, the Kaiser soon saw the cause of the serpent's seeking : he quickly perceived the reason that induced it to demand justice from

* *Rheimchronik. Erste Theil.*

him ; for its nest, which was full of eggs, was occupied by a hideous toad—a monster of the species.

“ Let the toad be flung in the fire,” said the monarch, solemnly ; “ and let the serpent have possession of his nest restored to him.”

This sentence was carried at once into execution : the toad was burnt ; and the serpent placed again in care of her incipient progeny. Charlemagne and his court then returned to Zurich.

Three days afterwards, as the Kaiser again sat at dinner, he was surprised at the appearance of the serpent, who, this time, glided into the hall unnoticed and unannounced.

“ Ho ! ho ! ” thought he, “ what does this mean ? I ’ll see.”

The reptile then approached the table, and, raising itself on its tail, reverentially bowing to the emperor the while, dropped from its mouth, into an empty plate which stood beside the monarch, a precious diamond, that glistened like the morning-star, it was so bright. Then, again abasing itself before him, the crawling creature glided out of the hall as it had entered, and was speedily lost to view. This diamond the puissant monarch caused to be set in a costly chased ring, of the richest red gold ; he then presented the valuable trinket to the fairest of his wives, and the best beloved—Fastrada—who there abode with him at the time.

Now, this stone had the virtue of attraction ; and whoso received it from another, so long as they wore it, received also the intensest affection of that individual. It was thus with Fastrada ; for no sooner did she place the ring on her finger, than the attachment of Charlemagne, great before, no longer knew any bounds. In fact, his love was more like to madness than to any sane passion. But though this talisman had a full power over love, it had no power over death ; and the mighty monarch was full soon to experience that nothing may avert the fiat of destiny.

Charlemagne and his beloved bride returned to Germany ; and, at Ingelheim palace, Fastrada died. The Kaiser was inconsolable : he would not listen to the voice of friendship : and he

sorrowed in silence over the dead body of his once beautiful bride. Nay, even when decay had commenced—when corruption had come to mar mortality—when the remains, late so lovely, were now loathly to look at for the rottenness and ruin visible in every feature—he could not be induced to leave the corpse for a moment, or to quit the chamber of death in which it lay. The Court were all astounded: they knew not what to make of the matter. At length Turpin, archbishop of Rheims, the chronicler of the fact, approached the corpse; and being made aware of the cause, by some supernatural communication, contrived to engage the Emperor's attention, while he removed it. The magic ring was found in the mouth of the dead empress, concealed beneath her tongue.

Immediately that the talisman was removed, the spell was broken; and Charlemagne now looked on the putrid corpse with all the natural horror and loathing of a living man. He gave orders for its immediate interment, which were at once carried into execution; and he then departed from Ingelheim for the forest of the Ardennes. Arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle, he took up his abode in the ancient Castle of Frankenstein, close by that famous city. The affection, however, which he had felt for Fastrada was now transferred to the possessor of the ring, Archbishop Turpin; and the pious ecclesiastic was so persecuted with the emperor's love, that he finally cast the talisman into the lake which surrounds the castle. An immediate transference of the royal liking took place: and the monarch thenceforth, and for ever after during his lifetime, loved Aix-la-Chapelle as a man might love his wife, and even more. So much, indeed, did he become attached to it, that he directed that he should be buried there: and there, accordingly, his remains rest unto this day.

The greatest lyric poet of Italy, Petrarch, has not disdained to relate the latter part of this story, which he learned while travelling in Germany;* and it forms a remarkable item in the researches of a grave French inquirer into the facts of history.†

* *Epistolæ Familiares*, lib. i. cap. iii.; a work to which reference has already been made in these pages (vol. i. p. 13).

† Pasquier. "*Recherches*," vi. 33.

FRAUENLOB.

The other monument alluded to is that of the chief of Teutonic Troubadours—Frauenlob—the ladies' eulogist.

Heinrich von Meissen, more generally known as Frauenlob, "the ladies' eulogist," was a canon of the Cathedral of Mainz, in the latter end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries. A noble gentleman by birth, and a doctor of theology by learning, he illustrated his high descent by his still higher name, and made, by the beautiful qualities of his mind, even the austerities of the Catholic priesthood amiable. He was the chief founder and great promovent of those poetic guilds, or corporations of Minnesängers, which succeeded his time, and which made the spirit of poesy so common among the German people ever since that period. His compositions were principally songs or odes in praise of women—hence his proud cognomen of Frauenlob—and hymns in honour of the Virgin, partaking largely of the loving spirit, as well as the *estro*, which animated the former. He died universally regretted in Mainz, and, indeed, in Germany, for his reputation had become general, in the year of our Lord 1317, and was buried within twenty-two paces of the present monument, which was erected to his memory, in the Cathedral, at the instance of Niklas Vogt, the Rhenish historian, the original having been destroyed by accident.

A noble knight, from far-distant lands, rode into the Gauthor of Mainz, on a spring morning of the year of grace thirteen hundred and seventeen. The bells of all the churches in that proud city were tolling sorrowfully a muffled peal: the shops were shut, although it was the mid-week: the streets were solitary, although the hour for resuming labour had long gone by. The stranger rode onwards—he reached the Cathedral—he gave his steed to his squire, and entered the venerable pile. As he passed through the side door, he saw a most extraordinary train of mourners pour into the church through the great portal, and

approach an open grave which stood in the nave of the sacred edifice. This procession was entirely composed of maidens and matrons, all garbed in the purest white : six of their number, the youngest and fairest, bore an open coffin between them, in which lay the body of a man in the prime of life, the beautiful and benevolent expression of whose noble countenance even death had not been able to deface ; the remainder, amounting to some thousands, followed in regular array. The body was deposited beside the grave ; and every maid and matron, in turn, strewed flowers upon it—each flower being watered with a copious shower of pearly tears. There remained but one—a fair, gentle girl, not yet arrived to the years of womanhood—to perform this last, sad ceremony. She approached it alone, as she had followed in the train—lone and solitary. Her heart was bursting with grief ; but still she tried to conquer it, and to appear composed. In vain, however, were her efforts to that effect. Her tottering steps barely sufficed to bear her to the edge of the pit ; where, as her floral offering fell on the bier, she fell to the earth—also a corpse.

“ Fair ladye,” spake the stranger knight to a matron who stood near him, “ wherefore is this singular scene ? Is yon maiden the hapless ladye-love of that noble-looking being who now lies beside his open grave ? ”

“ Yea,” replied the dame, sobbing ; “ that is she ; and she loved him well.”

“ They were lovely in life, and in death they were not divided,” chanted aloud the deep sonorous voice of the Prince Archbishop, Peter von Aichspalt, who officiated in person at the ceremony of the entombment. “ Ashes to ashes—dust to dust. Peace be unto them.”

“ Amen ! ” responded the choristers of the cathedral in wailing notes, which resounded like the *Miserere* of the Sistine chapel, through the “ long-drawn ” aisle of that ancient edifice.

“ And ladye fair,” resumed the knight, “ may I pray you to tell me who that noble being was when he lived ? A prince mayhap, or a great hero ; for, otherwise, why these crowns of laurel which are heaped so high upon his lowly bier ? ”

“ Sir Knight,” the dame mildly but proudly replied, “ no prince bear we to the grave ; for by the women of Mainz, may

